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WAR PICTURES
BEHIND THE LINES





A M^{RS} MILLEDAND
MINISTRE DE LA GUERRE.

Maurice NEUMONT
Paris
8 Septembre
1914

Frontispiece

LE BATAILLON SACRÉ

By MAURICE NEUMONT

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WAR PICTURES BEHIND THE LINES

BY

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'INDIAN PICTURES AND PROBLEMS,' 'CONSIDERATIONS,' ETC.

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To my Constituents

*This Record
of work done and of things seen
during the first year of
The Great German War
is respectfully
Dedicated.*

AUTHOR'S NOTE

MY grateful thanks are due to so many people who, consciously or otherwise, have provided me with material for my book that I can only acknowledge my debt, in one comprehensive phrase, to all my French and English friends for the valuable assistance that they have given me.

Especially, however, are my thanks due to the Chairman of the British Red Cross Society, by whose permission I am enabled to include Chapters IV and V which deal in detail with one aspect of our Red Cross work, and to those French artists who have so courteously allowed me to reproduce their admirable pictures in this volume.

Further, I am indebted to the French War Office and to MM. Berger-Levrault (Publishers, Paris) for the German diaries that will be found herein, and to certain gentlemen in Switzerland

who gave me the original documents containing German orders to French refugees.

To one and all I am deeply obliged, and I beg them to accept this inadequate expression of my thanks.

PREFACE

NOT long ago, I was talking to the principal medical officer of a French Military Hospital, situated on a high plateau and far from any railway station. In the course of our conversation, I asked him some question about the progress of the War. 'The War,' he replied: 'I know nothing of it except that it fills my hospital. My whole time and energy are devoted to considering how I can get my patients from the station to the wards, how quickly I can get my food supplies, what I am to do for water if the springs fail me, and other problems of immediate concern.' I was much struck by this observation, which contained a great truth. This German War is of a magnitude so vast in its dimensions that no human being can grasp it as a whole, or make one huge panoramic picture of the events that succeed one another with lightning rapidity in that

world-wide arena of suffering and hate. Generals and privates alike have only just time in the day to concern themselves with the immediate prospects in front of them and their next-door neighbours, whether in the trenches or at head quarters. So with non-combatants and the public generally: we all become specialists and, for once in our lives, take very little heed of other people's business. 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' is applicable not only to the mother whose son is fighting in Flanders and who, therefore, gives no attention to the happenings in Asia Minor, in Poland, or on the Isono, but also to the ambulance-driver, who knows no battle-field but that one from which he daily conveys the wounded to hospital, and to the railway transport officer on the lines of communication, upon whose organising power 'the Front' is daily depending for reserves of men and ammunition and food supplies. In all these cases, the business of the day is their 'treasure,' and in it are wrapped up both heart and brain.

And not least does the old Biblical truth apply to the author of a book about the War. He can only write readably about what he has seen and heard in the very limited area of his own activity

—a mere corner of one of the many scenes in that huge theatre of operations. But, with good fortune, he can paint his own small picture ; and from this, together with a thousand other pictures similarly painted, may hereafter be derived something like an accurate impression of a world at war.

I write this by way of a warning preface to my own book, for I am well aware of the modesty of its scope. It contains no word of strategy or politics : I am unable to discuss the former and unwilling, to-day, to embark upon the latter ; so I leave the questions of the origin and conduct of the War to pens more competent than mine. Nor will there be found herein anything of life and death in the trenches which I never visited ; nor of other dangers such as our Army knows too well, but with which I am unacquainted : these have their own chroniclers, whose first-hand evidence I could not supplement if I would.

The main object that I have in view in writing the following pages is to record certain features of Red Cross work in which for the past year I have been engaged, to sketch scenes that I have visited and people I have met in the course of my journeyings behind the lines, and to offer reflections

and impressions of the effect of the War upon the lives and fortunes of those with whom I have come in contact. And I have tried, in selecting illustrations to accompany these chapters, to include a few minor documents of contemporary interest which many of us have seen, but which some may have thrown aside.

For the rest, my readers must have recourse to other and more important works ; my ambition will be satisfied if I have succeeded in conveying a clear idea of the work of the ' Wounded and Missing ' Department of the Red Cross Society, and of the immense help that we have received from the unvarying kindness of the lion-hearted people of France.

IAN MALCOLM

FRANCE.
August 1915.

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WAR PICTURES BEHIND THE LINES

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST PHASE

The Kaiser's Birthday—Parliament and War—Recruiting in England—Posters—The Soul of England

IN January 1914, it was my fortune to be in Berlin, as a guest of the British Ambassador, for the birthday of the Emperor William. Twenty years before, I had been attached to the Embassy and had not had speech with his Majesty since then. Nothing could have exceeded the friendliness of his conversation, which was concerned largely with English politics generally and with the likelihood of Mr. Churchill rejoining the Unionist party.

Two days afterwards, I had a long talk with the now notorious Crown Prince, and his words have since earned an added significance. Let me copy from an old diary the last few phrases, in the form of a dialogue.

Crown Prince. 'After all, you English people ought to be better friends with Germany than you are.'

I. M. 'Sir, we are always ready to be friends as you know, but to all of our overtures your Chancellor replies with an invariable snub.'

Crown Prince. 'How can we trust you whilst you are allied with such people as the French or the Russians? You have nothing really in common with them, and you have nearly everything in common with us. Together we could divide Europe and keep the peace of the world for ever.'

I. M. 'But how would you propose to do that; given our existing treaties, how could we break them in order to be better friends with you?'

Crown Prince. 'You could shut your eyes and let us take the French Colonies first of all. We want them.'

I. M. 'Forgive me, Sir; I have seen several of your Colonies and, may I say it with great respect, it would surely be better to improve the Colonies you possess before you take those belonging to other people.'

Crown Prince. 'That is very candid; but

you know very well that none of our Colonies are worth anything ; if they had been valuable, you would have had them long ago ! ’

I could not help laughing heartily at this last observation, which was seasoned with great good humour. The interview closed by my making the trite remark that now-a-days nobody wanted war, which injured victors and vanquished in like degree ; to which the Crown Prince vigorously replied : ‘ I beg your pardon ; *I want war. I want to have a smack at those French swine as soon as ever I can.*’

Compare this conversation with the famous Dispatch 85 in the English White Paper, which tells of Sir Edward Goschen’s last interview at the German Foreign Office eight months afterwards ; then let the German apologists reiterate their conviction that a peace-loving Fatherland was compelled to take up arms against the intrigues of her enemies.

As this is a book of personal impressions, I will add this note, before leaving the subject of my visit to Berlin : I was quite convinced that, at any rate in the Prussian capital, the Crown Prince and the military party were the masters of the Parliament and the people. The Heir-

Apparent was the idol of the populace—I dare say that Rehoboam was the same in his day. Wherever he drove, the people stood and cheered him; the Emperor was treated with the utmost respect, as well he might be, but never was he the object of constant demonstrations of popular affection, such as I saw exhibited towards his eldest son. I am not going to hazard the opinion that nothing, at any time, would have made the Emperor William break the peace of Europe; the evidence of events of the past twenty years forbids so rash a speculation. But I do firmly believe that the present War, at the present time, with all its hideous accompaniments of slaughter and barbarity, is due to the headstrong policy and the degenerate impulses of the Crown Prince and the Military party in Prussia.

And yet I will confess that, even with this warlike witness to a desire for conquest before me, I could not believe, early in last July, that we were so close to the day of Armageddon. Even towards the end of that month, I was as doubtful as his Majesty's Ministers appear to have been whether Great Britain would go to war. But I am sure that the nation, on learning all the facts, saw the path of honour and duty more quickly and clearly

than did the responsible advisers of the Crown ; and that nothing but the official intimation that there was a solid patriotic Parliament behind the Prime Minister put an end to that lamentable period of tension and doubt between July 31 and August 4, which made a Briton's life intolerable in England and unendurable in France. Never shall I forget the relief caused by the speeches of Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Asquith in Parliament when we knew that the ultimatum was to be delivered and we felt that the die was cast. It was of the first importance to a people, not over-inclined of late years to give deep thought to policies or problems that do not concern their incomes, to have a definite course of action marked out for them by the leaders of their choice. That course was at last most clearly defined : it was, to repeat the words of the late Lord Goschen in reference to a serious crisis in our domestic affairs, ' to make our wills and do our duty.'

From that moment began the transfiguration of our nation, though Parliament lagged behind. When we had recovered from the wholly unexpected shock of finding ourselves face to face with war against the greatest military power in the world, there was not a decent man or woman in the Empire

who did not immediately say secretly or aloud : ' What can *I* do ? ' Under our peculiar, if time-honoured, system of government that question had to be answered by the individual who asked it : no lead was given by Ministers, no initiative was taken to organise the industries or the manhood of the nation. We, who did not belong to either the Navy or the Army, were as sheep without a shepherd. What was *our* duty ? What could *we* do ? My own chance came when Lord Kitchener published his first request for 100,000 men as the nucleus of a new Army. Being, unfortunately, untrained in military exercises and also beyond the age-limit prescribed for recruits, I thought I might at least be able to help as a recruiting agent. Talking over the matter one evening with Major Archer-Shee, M.P., he told me that Lord Kitchener had sanctioned his taking a ' Travelling Recruiting Bureau ' into the West of England and he advised me to get permission to do the same thing in another area. By August 17, I was equipped : with four motor-cars, a doctor, a recruiting-sergeant and a couple of clerks, a full and self-contained recruiting-agency, we set out to do what we could to raise men in Norfolk and in Suffolk, part of which latter county I had

represented in Parliament for eleven years. I mention this fact, in itself quite unimportant, because it brought out so vividly the unanimous determination of all parties to do their utmost for the country. Day after day, night after night, I was speaking in towns and villages at meetings arranged by the agents of both political parties, and attended by old friends and old foes alike. All feuds were healed, all daggers sheathed, opponents of life-long standing spoke from the same platform, party colours were blended and buried in red, white, and blue ; and all this months before Parliament understood that the nation wanted a non-party government to see this thing through.

Our recruiting methods were no less unusual than was the new atmosphere which now permeated my old constituency and East Anglia generally. The plan was for our fleet of cars to leave our head quarters about 10.30 each morning, and to drive in procession with flags and placards through a certain section of the area allotted to us. In this way great interest was created in the agricultural districts, both in the War itself and in the matter of recruiting. At each village we used to stop—or sometimes by the roadside, to

have a word with the harvesters—and often picked up a recruit or two, occasionally a dozen, before the evening. On the principle of striking while the iron is hot, we always managed to get a private room in a cottage or an inn, to interview the recruit before enlisting him. If he seemed fit and willing our doctor examined him, the recruiting-sergeant answered technical questions as to pay, separation allowance, &c., the clerks filled up the papers, and, as a magistrate, I swore him in for a soldier of the King and gave him a railway ticket to the nearest depot. The procedure in the evenings was very much the same: we tried to keep to short speeches and few, in order to get through the necessary formalities for all recruits before leaving the neighbourhood. Sometimes this kept a double staff working till past midnight, but if they could come back with thirty recruits to their credit, they were delighted and no fatigue was too great for them.

I am afraid, on looking back to those interesting but comparatively calm weeks, our irregular methods must have been a great trial to the more highly organised, but not very elastic, system of the regular Army—as represented at the depots. The majority of the officers were extremely kind

and patient with us, though we must often have upset their calculations for food, &c., by sending them a score or so of properly attested recruits of whose existence they had no idea until the men arrived from the train. And more than once, in large centres like Ipswich and Norwich, the depots had to be closed in order to get sufficient staff and material to cope with the splendid numbers that responded to the call. Altogether it was a novel, curious, and most interesting experience — this ‘whirlwind campaign,’ as it came to be called. We held twenty-two meetings between August 20 and September 3, and were responsible for about two thousand recruits, drawn from the best of all classes in Nelson’s and Kitchener’s counties.

Thus encouraged, I went next into Sussex and Kent and held twenty-four meetings in thirteen days. But here the results were not so good. Others had already been working these districts with admirable results; the standards for height and chest measurement had been raised, and, I am sorry to say, the accounts sent home from various camps of the poor accommodation, scanty food, and bad clothing arrangements were quite sufficient to deter hundreds of moderately

willing men from becoming soldiers. This is not the time to blame or criticise the deficiencies of those early days. They were probably unavoidable in a country taken by surprise, and they are certainly remedied by now, but they were bitter while they lasted : they recoiled upon the head of Authority, which was not altogether blameless, and substantially counteracted the efforts of those who were recruiting in its name.

Here ended my work at home, and I left it with very definite impressions. The secret of recruiting is found, I am certain, in personal relations being set up between those who know and those who want to know ; the day of the ' poster ' is over and done with, for general elections and the wiles of politicians have taught all men to distrust and deride such elementary aids to decision. The analogy of commercial advertisement does not hold good as regards recruiting : the Government has nothing to sell and the citizen does not require to buy ; but the former has a story to tell and a demand to make to grown-up and responsible men and women, which cannot be fairly expressed upon a wall. I am sure much time was lost and thousands of pounds were thrown away by using these vicarious forms

of appeal, which would have been quite unnecessary if all the 'powers that be' had stepped down from their pedestals and, having made up their minds what was wanted, had gone to all the people of the three kingdoms to ask for it. As for the people themselves, they are willing and true as steel. They have proved it in all these months, as they have slowly grown to know, through the sorrows of the heart or the effort of unaided intellect, how desperate and dark is the conflict through which we have to pass to victory and peace; but now that the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, is their possession—a treasure of their own finding to a very large extent—their response in offering millions of lives for their country is the highest possible expression of their deep faith in the grandeur of the cause for which they are at war.

CHAPTER II

EARLY IMPRESSIONS

Paris in October—Cordial Relations—British ‘Phlegm’ and French Calm—General Criticism—How Long ?

TOWARDS the end of September I realised that the new model for recruiting-meetings was to crowd a number of speakers, representing different parties in the State, on to a platform, and to let them all speak for as long as the spirit moved them. I attended two or three such and observed that the spirit first ‘moved’ the audience, whose enthusiasm to follow the drum sensibly evaporated after three-quarters of an hour in some covered building on a warm autumn evening.

I, therefore, accepted the invitation of the Red Cross Society to enlist with them, and to do whatever might be most useful at the moment. My first job was to escort a band of some fifty nurses over to Paris at the beginning of October. Except for the fact that nobody knew what was to become of them when they got there, our journey, via Folkestone and Dieppe, was uneventful, though

somewhat long. Once arrived, my charges were billeted in various places, and, on the following day, were consigned to the many hospitals that were clamouring for their services.

It was a curious experience to me, who have known and loved France for a quarter of a century, to realise that now I was in the capital of an invaded country with the enemy only three hours distant from my hotel in the heart of the city. But such was, nevertheless, the fact, and it became more apparent by day and night as time went on. For instance, the morning after my arrival, I was awakened by the explosion of a bomb—not a very loud or deafening noise, really—from a German ‘Taube,’ a bird of prey which was far too much at home over Paris in those days and until the necessary steps were taken to see that, if it chose to fly so far afield, it came at its peril. But so much has already been written about the appearance of Paris in the autumn that it is hardly worth while to add to the volume of impressions that have already reached the public. After the shock of the retreat, even after the miracle of the Marne, who could expect Paris (or any self-respecting city) to be normal or anything but darkened and depressed? The barricades were

still standing at the gates, the city was full of wounded allies, the enemy only eighty kilometres distant: what wonder that La Ville Lumière had become a City of Dreadful Night, that hundreds of shops were shut, that Government and Embassies and Banks had retired to Bordeaux, that theatres were closed, that churches were crowded? There was no surprise, surely, in all this; the wonder was that, despite the traditional Gallic temperament—volatile, impulsive, and impressionable—so many thousands of shops remained open and hundreds of thousands of French citizens of the humble classes carried on their daily avocations with a sang-froid and imperturbability that is beyond dispute or praise.

Of course we were under Military Law, and a very good law too: nobody could move out of Paris without a pass, or stay there without complying with the strictest formalities as to papers, &c. Restaurants were closed at 9.30 P.M.; no shop lights nor illuminated advertisements nor sky-signs were permitted; no head-lights on motors nor naked lamps shining from the windows of private houses or elsewhere, save only the great protecting military search-lights which quartered the city from dusk till dawn. After London

(in those days) it certainly was a change, but not a surprising one. We were so awfully close to the 'real thing.' Our impressions of the war were not gathered from reading morning newspapers at a comfortable breakfast-table, but rather from men who had been under fire in the morning and brought in the news at luncheon-time. That is, surely, the reason why nobody grumbled, or yet grumbles, at all these curtailments of personal liberty and comfort. Nobody had the heart to spend the night in a theatre or at the cafés: hearts were buried in the trenches on the Aisne.

Since then things have certainly become a little easier, socially speaking: that is to say, the restaurants are now open till ten o'clock, a few of the theatres give performances so many times a week, but they and the music-halls have to be very careful that their repertoires do not outrage by levity or otherwise the feelings of a nation that is in desperate earnest. I well remember the reception—shall I call it hostile?—that was accorded to quite a favourite variety artiste in the winter when she suddenly, without forethought or malice of any kind, took it into her head to introduce a few 'tango' steps into her 'turn.' In a moment she perceived that she had made a mistake, and

quickly she retrieved it: the season of 1914-15 could not weather the sort of programme which 1913-14 had applauded.

But there remains one thing which does not change and upon which I like to dwell—that is, the wonderful kindness displayed to any who wear khaki uniforms. We of the Red Cross wear it, I believe, at the orders of the War Office; but it is not we who sowed the harvest of delightful friendship which now we reap. This is due, and we know it well, to the splendid qualities of the Expeditionary Force which left England in August; to officers and men who protected the women and played with the children and fought alongside the men of France as cheerfully as though they had all been bred together in the same country. I could weary even the most patient reader with stories told me, on my journeys over past battle-fields, of the gallantry and good humour of ‘Tommy’—a name light-heartedly given at home to our soldier-folk, but one which is held in affectionate remembrance wherever he has fought on French soil, and which lends a reflection of his glory to those of us who are privileged to wear his cloth.

It was enough to walk through the streets of Paris in October to benefit by the legacy which

the British soldier has left to others of his race. People sitting next to one in a restaurant would want to pay for our luncheons; children would run up and clamour to shake hands or to pin a tricolour flag upon our tunics. One dear old lady, who sold newspapers at a kiosque on the Boulevards, absolutely declined to allow me to pay for my daily copy of *The Times*. In spite of all my remonstrances, she insisted: 'I won't take a sou from you; I am a good Frenchwoman and a good friend; you are my friends.' So for weeks I compromised by giving her a daily bunch of violets in exchange for my newspaper. In the country it was just the same: even now one is mobbed by jolly little children as one goes about one's business in the towns or hamlets between the Marne and the Aisne. And, whenever I hear that joyous cry 'les Anglais, les Anglais,' I feel proud for the men who, by their example and their courage, have won from our great Allies and their children the regard which we non-combatants are permitted to share. May the sun never rise upon the day when that regard shall diminish through any fault of our own; and may we never forget that, although we islanders have perforce to make our homes in many lands, we are

here the welcome guests of a most hospitable race, and that all the privileges which we enjoy whilst fighting beside them are ours only by courtesy and not by right.

How strange that the fullness of time should have brought about this basic change in the sentiments of two great neighbour-nations towards one another, one hundred years after the Battle of Waterloo! It comes with something of a shock to read Mr. Pitt's war-speeches, in so far as they concern his appreciation of the French in the early days of the nineteenth century, now that our fellow countrymen are fighting and falling for the same cause. So well do we now know one another that we can afford to differ like friends upon questions which show that our points of view are by no means identical in all respects. You remember for example that, whilst our cavalry were having a comparatively easy time in Flanders, they sent for a pack or two of hounds to keep themselves fit by hunting the hares that abound there. It was soon found that this form of exercise created a wrong impression, and hunting was summarily abandoned. Other kinds of recreation in which our men indulged did not, it is true, produce such resentment, but

they caused intense surprise. One day, I was talking to some townspeople at Trilport, near Meaux. They were telling me stories of the Retreat and how highly they thought of our Army. 'But we shall never quite understand you,' they added. 'What other army is there which, after retiring for so many days and nights with the enemy at their heels would have behaved like the English? They reached Meaux, Monsieur, and what did they do? They at once began to play football, they took boats and rowed on the river, they even *bathed*; and then they went on fighting.' I heard another instance of what is known as British 'phlegm' the other day. Up in Flanders, not far from the firing-line, some artists were giving an impromptu music-hall entertainment to the rest of the regiment. Their costumes were so quaint that one of the audience asked leave to photograph the company in a group. They were duly posed and adjured to 'stand quite still . . . one . . . two'—when a shell exploded outside in the empty court-yard. 'Hang it!' said the photographer, 'that is too bad; two of you *did* move.' And what of the young soldier—a recruit—who had a day off? A friend of mine was motoring behind Ypres, over a road between

two fields that had been mercilessly pitted by the offspring of 'Jack Johnson' and 'Black Maria.' Since then heavy rain had fallen and had filled these immense holes with water. By the side of one such sat Tommy, solemnly fishing with rod and line. 'What are you doing, my lad?' said my friend. 'Fishing, sir,' replied the angler without a smile on his face. 'But you can't catch fish in a shell-hole like that, you know'; to which the answer was, 'Wait and see.' So my friend waited and saw. Tommy soon landed quite a big fish, to the utter amazement of the onlooker, who asked how it was done. 'Well you see, sir, yesterday I was off duty and went down with my net to the river, yonder. I caught lots of fish and put them into these holes for me and my pals to catch when we wanted them.'

But, after all, though our race is good-naturedly chaffed about its phlegm by a race that pretends to nothing of that kind, the French (in Paris at least) have it also to a large extent. For instance, when the 'Taubes' came soaring over the capital about five o'clock every afternoon in the autumn, there were immense crowds waiting to see them without the least sign of fear. One day they were late; the crowd waited till nearly six o'clock,



L'HEURE DU TAUBE

By ALBERT GUILLAUME

(Reproduced by kind permission of the Artist)

and I heard an impatient voice exclaim : ' I wish they would be more punctual, I shall be late for dinner.'

And even now, when we get telephonic news from the Front that Zeppelins or aeroplanes are on their way to Paris, when street lights are extinguished and 'pompiers' tear through the boulevards in motor-cars, sounding the 'alerte'

Si les zeppelins revenaient...

La demi-alerte de la nuit dernière. — Ce que seront désormais les sonneries de clairon des pompiers.



SONNERIE DU • GARDE A VOUS • ANNONÇANT L'ALERTE



LA • BRELOQUE • OU • BERLOQUE • ANNONÇANT LA FIN DE L'ALERTE

upon their horns to warn everyone to go to ground, there is no particular excitement except on the part of the police. A little girl was heard to ask her mother (who had evidently forgotten the regulations) whether she should dust out the cellars and make the beds there for the night; and an old lady who, with hundreds of others, was waiting for the 'Zepps' on the highest point

of Montmartre, turned upon the policeman who ordered her to take cover somewhere :

‘ What next, I should like to know ? I have a son fighting in the Argonne and my old man is fighting in Champagne : until you give them umbrellas to keep off the shells I’m going to stay out in the open too ! ’

So you observe that, even in the matter of keeping cool, we are drawing closer together as time goes on.

I am sure we can all remember the days when it would have been impossible for an Englishman and a Frenchman to discuss quietly the propriety of racing in war-time ; but in the early months of this year it was a constant topic of amicable difference in club or café. I am pretty certain in my own mind that the French, on the whole, disliked our racing in England. I judge that, not so much by anything hostile which they said or wrote, but by their evident relief and satisfaction when we gave it up. Again, the present excellent relations are well typified by a conversation in which I engaged with a couple of French officers. The one was inclined to be a little impatient as to the non-arrival of our new Army on the shores of France, and pretended to be

incredulous as to the existence in England of three million men under arms. He was also critical of our unpreparedness in the matter of shells, and I was beginning to feel rather uncertain as to what my reply should be. Fortunately his companion metaphorically fell upon him and replied: 'Do you doubt the men that England can send: then probably you doubt the number she has sent already when she only guaranteed us a hundred thousand. But you might well be uncertain whether, if we had not compulsory service, we could send even two million trained volunteers to fight over in England. For myself I doubt it. And, as for being unprepared—we ought not to bring that charge. What have we been doing over here for forty years except demonstrating before the Statue in the Place de la Concorde and calling for "La Revanche"? Were we prepared when the great moment arrived?' I, naturally, could not have said all that, but I was grateful to the man who did say it, especially as he succeeded in persuading his friend to adopt a more lenient attitude towards our failings.

But neither our racing nor our unreadiness annoy our friends the French so much as our insular slackness as regards our treatment of

enemy aliens. I was out at the Front some time in April or May when the announcement was made in Parliament that so many thousands—was it 24,000?—of Germans were at large in Great Britain and Ireland. It is not too much to say that this declaration simply staggered our allies by its apparently callous indifference to consequences. ‘Fancy seeing even one hundred known Germans at large in France to-day!’ But, here again, as I find myself in complete accord with their condemnation of our policy of arrogant adhesion to a dangerous tradition of hospitality to strangers within our gates, there is no estranging difference between us. I will, however, record my conviction, if only for my own satisfaction, that our practice of consciously harbouring the enemy has created a profoundly bad impression in France and that, if persisted in, it will jeopardise the harmony of an international *entente* which ought to be safe from risk of every kind.

Another fruitful subject of discussion is the probable length of the War. ‘How long will it last, do you think?’—a question which I have always thought that no wise person should either ask or answer. Until quite recently, I could not meet a single Frenchman in civil or military life

who would listen to Lord Kitchener's prophecy that it might last three years; but now their natural impatience is controlled, and they are becoming resigned to the chances of a struggle more protracted than once they thought possible. They have lost confidence in the clairvoyants and soothsayers who predicted for the conclusion of the War certain dates that have, alas! long since passed into history. Of the prophecies only one that I know of still has its chance of fulfilment: it is the forecast of a young Breton model, who was sitting to a well-known painter of military subjects. At the beginning of last July, several weeks before war was declared, the model arrived at the studio and announced that war was imminent. The artist took this for a joke and, without looking up from his work, said, 'When shall we know?' And the young man answered, 'On August 2.'

'And when will it be over—can you tell me that?'

'On May 22.'

'Very well; come and see me on the following day, and we shall then know if your guess was correct.'

But the model shook his head sadly and

replied : ‘ Alas ! I cannot accept that invitation for I shall be killed in the last week of November.’

The remarkable thing is that war with France was declared on August 2, the model was killed on November 27 ; as for the War being finished on May 22—well, the year was not specified.

But whether the end come soon or late, it is not possible now to find a Frenchman who is not absolutely confident of a final and crushing victory for his country. Time was, perhaps, when the morale of the civilian population needed stiffening. It was partly achieved by a story which is now well known, but I repeat it because it has made history. Two French soldiers in the trenches were discussing the chances of victory.

‘ Yes ; not a doubt of it,’ said the one, ‘ *pourvu qu’ils tiennent.*’

‘ *Qui ça ?*’

‘ *Les civils.*’

This anecdote ran like wild-fire through the length and breadth of France and had an immediate effect upon the civilians, who, ever since, have ‘ stuck to it ’ as the French soldier said they must. It is capable of a still wider application—to lands beyond the Republic of France.

CHAPTER III

WORKS OF MERCY

The Red Cross—Hospitals in Paris—A Changed Capital—Life in Boulogne—Hearts of Gold—Home Generosity—A Dastardly Trick

THE work of the British Red Cross Society will loom large in the pages of the first full history that is written about the German War. There will be things to praise and things to blame, of course; but there can be no doubt that, in the relief of suffering abroad and anxiety at home, this organisation has fulfilled a splendid mission of mercy, despite difficulties and jealousies and minor defects upon which it would be unwise to dwell at present. Like other organisations of a more official character, the Red Cross was taken by surprise when war broke out; if excuses are to be found for the Cabinet and Parliament and other professional bodies, they can certainly be found for the Red Cross, which is essentially an amateur society that has to suffer for the defects of its qualities. Unlike Minerva it could not, at

any rate it did not, spring into being fully armed : perhaps in future it will be permitted to accompany the British Army on manœuvres in peace-time, and to learn how best it can serve and combine with the R.A.M.C. in time of war. But that is another story ; here and now we have to admit that, in order to take its proper place, which is, I suppose, somewhere between the troops in the trenches and the families at home, it had to improvise an enormous staff at a moment's notice to operate in France as well as in England, and those who know most about its work are just those who marvel most at what it has accomplished for the wounded. Much has been written in many books about the details of Red Cross work ; its fleets of motor-ambulances, hospital ships, trains ; its armies of doctors and nurses and orderlies now working not only in France and Flanders, but in Malta, Alexandria, Serbia, Italy, and elsewhere ; its huge consignments of stores and appliances and comforts which are daily being shipped in bulk to its ever-expanding theatre of operations oversea. It is no part of my task to add to what has already been said, but only to speak of it as I have seen it and, later on, to describe a branch of its work of which little is known and nothing has been written.

When I reached Paris in early October, the head quarters of the B.R.C.S. was at the Hôtel d'Iéna, a large building with an immense number of bedrooms, which had been generously placed at the disposal of the Society, but which I thought inconveniently constructed for its work. Still, there the work was carried on; thence long processions of ambulances started early every morning for the Front to bring back their sad burden of wounded and dying to the Paris hospitals; there doctors and nurses by the hundred received their instructions as to where to go: cargoes of hospital equipment were dispatched to their various destinations as fast as they could be loaded; crowds of willing workers and anxious relatives besieged the doors of different departments asking for employment or for information about their wounded. It was a scene of tremendous and unceasing activity in which all, from the Commissioners down to the last-joined orderly, bore a noble and unflinching part and worked often for twenty out of the twenty-four hours of the day.

The hospitals were no less marvellous. Never, I suppose, since war began have hospitals been so wonderfully organised for the wounded as those in Paris for the troops of the Allied Forces: that, at any rate, was the decided opinion of the

General Staffs and of the patients. The Avenue des Champs Elysées is, as all the world knows, full of great and fashionable hotels, in some of which many of us have stayed and revelled in the piping days of peace. But in September every one of them was converted into a hospital—the Astoria, Claridge's, the Elysée Palace, and others. And how deeply impressive was the change of scene! No more splendid carriages and opulent automobiles waiting for hours outside the doors; but ambulances, dirty and shot-riddled, discharging their precious freights of broken lives into these havens of compassion and care; no more processions of fashionable men and women crowding into the marble halls to listen to Hungarian bands at afternoon tea-time, for these same halls had been turned into wards for French and English wounded. The drawing- and dining-rooms were lined with beds, the saloons with the best light became the operating-theatres, the bars were dispensaries, and the grill-rooms were reverently transformed into mortuary chapels. Strange sudden transformations, indeed!—stranger still to realise that rooms so hallowed by suffering are even now returning to the purposes of their origin.

As in Paris so at Boulogne, the change was no less apparent. Most of us remember the pier in normal times : its cheery aspect, the sunshine and the bustle, and the merry old fisherfolk who greeted us holiday-makers as we arrived on the steamer from Folkestone. But now—a knot of soldiers, a group with heads bandaged or arms in slings, a crowd of fine-drawn officers and men returning from the trenches for seventy-two hours' leave : these form the main body of occupants of the pier, the approach to which is blocked with wooden cases of stores, machinery, and other military impedimenta for the Front. The harbour is full of shipping, most of it inactive for the present ; there are two large hospital-ships, however, on to which an unending cortège of stretcher-bearers are carrying casualties to be taken home for treatment and so to free as many beds as possible for urgent cases that are brought down by train from the battle-fields. One stands amazed at the cheeriness of the wounded wherever one comes across them ; a tearful or complaining soldier is nowhere to be seen. ' Oh well, somebody's got to get it,' is the philosophic comment which is always on their lips. Only once did I see a soldier crying ; the doctor was at his

bedside trying to comfort and assure him that he would soon be all right; then I heard the wounded man say, with gentle scorn: 'Don't think I'm crying about my leg, doctor: I was just dreaming about my captain whom those devils shot dead in my arms, as I was carrying him back from the trenches.'

Yes, their consideration for others and forgetfulness of self is an example to us all. What could be more touching than a story which my wife tells of a visit to one of the hospitals in Boulogne? She was talking to a little Saxon prisoner whose head was swathed in bandages, when a tall strapping fellow in the Gordons pushed his way on crutches through a crowd of convalescents and said to her: 'Would you mind saying to him that I'm sorry I had to bash him so hard on the head with the butt of my rifle, and I hope I didn't hurt him much.'

But outside as well as inside the hospitals, the world is showing a charity and loving-kindness that is widespread and genuine. The solicitude for the welfare of our wounded soldiers, exhibited by well-to-do and poor French people alike as the train-loads slowly crawled back to Paris from the Marne, was splendid though sometimes

embarrassing. For not only would they pass food, drink, and flowers into the compartments, but, where there was a chance, they would sometimes coax a man out of his carriage and take him to a château or a cottage and nurse him till he was well enough to rejoin. In their goodness of heart, and in their ignorance of our Army regulations, they overlooked the necessity of reporting their kind action to the authorities, and from this cause many a man was reported as 'missing,' who subsequently turned up strong and well, thanks to the care of his newly found friends. And here is another instance of spontaneous charity. One morning my wife was shopping in the market-place at Boulogne and stopped to buy a few flowers for the men in hospital. She had been especially begged to bring back as many violets as she could carry, and so took a huge basket with her for the purpose. It was a gorgeous day and the radiance of the sun upon the flowers, set out upon their little stalls beneath coloured umbrellas, was in festive contrast to the sombre scenes from which no worker in the wards could escape. A little group of children followed and heard her ask one old lady to sell her all her violets for our wounded. It took a few minutes to collect the bunches and

pack them carefully into the basket. Meanwhile the children had dispersed; they had scattered about the market announcing that here was an English lady who wanted flowers for her hospital. The result was that, when the original transaction (all but payment) was completed, the English lady found herself surrounded by beaming and benevolent peasant-women of all ages, their snow-white aprons filled to overflowing with violets and roses and carnations which they emptied into the basket until there was not room in it for another petal. 'Take these, and these, and these, with our love to the brave English soldiers,' they said. 'We would give you ten times as many if we had them.' Not a penny would they accept; but I know that if they could have seen the faces of the soldiers who received their gifts, they would have felt amply repaid.

From home, too, we got everything we could want in the way of comforts for the men. Surely never was such lavish generosity known before, and I wonder if we can ever compute in terms of money the endless stores of books and wool and playing-cards, of jig-saw puzzles and mouth-organs, of cigarettes and matches and newspapers that were sent over to France by a grateful British

public! I can quote the case of my own constituency of Croydon as an example—one out of hundreds. For the purposes of my own work in the hospitals, I wanted a good supply of tobacco, so I wrote and asked my constituents for it through the local newspapers. Within a month, I received fifteen large wooden cases full of cigarettes and cigars, pipes and tobacco and matches, besides numberless smaller consignments. One case was sent by children; it was packed with boxes of cigarettes each containing a Christmas card or a letter from the donor. I copied one letter which particularly touched me, written in large pencilled letters between ruled lines:

DEAR SOLDIER,—

Mum has asked Father Xmas not to put toys in our socks so he has sent us money instead to buy the brave men something. I hope you will like these.

Love from

* * *

It is well to add, in closing this chapter on works of mercy, that in our English hospitals, whether military or Red Cross, the treatment of the German wounded was beyond praise. They were made to feel—and all I spoke to told me that they did feel—quite at home, and they were not

backward in expressing their gratitude for all that was done for them. The same is true in French hospitals, and one wonders who can have spread the malicious lies to the contrary effect in some neutral countries. Yet so much feeling has been stirred up here and there abroad, by these and by other methods, that some of our enemies had resort to a strangely mean form of what I suppose was meant for reprisal and which came under my notice. German prisoners of war in France are, of course, allowed to receive parcels of warm underclothing, &c., addressed to them at their place of internment. Imagine my horror on being shown the central content of a dozen such parcels—a dagger concealed in each one, with a murderous blade eleven inches long, stamped ‘Muenchen’ (Munich)! How many more were detected I do not know; but the lives of many French sentries were probably saved by the astuteness of the Paris police. Can calculated atrocity go farther than this? I think not; but now a days it is impossible to be sure.

[illegible]

Les bandes „CONTINENTAL“ chev-
ronnées, créées par „CONTINENTAL“
ont été adoptées sur les autobus de la
Ville de Paris par la C. G. O.

A horrible slaughter, the village was burnt, the French thrown into the burning houses, and civilians and everything else burnt with them.

Hard fighting is still continuing. Yesterday two guns, six ammunition-wagons, six machine-guns were captured. The worst of all is the hunger and thirst which have to be endured everywhere. Dry bread thrown away by the French on the battle-field serves. . . .

This extract is taken from the diary of Private Hassemer, 8th German Army Corps.

CHAPTER IV

MISSING AND WOUNDED

A New Department—The Silent Brave—Searchers—The Work extends—The French System—Record and Casualty Office—Help from all Quarters—First Aid for the Anxious

Missing. . . . A distracted mother is wandering through the forest and the woodland villages that encircle Compiègne and lead south to Villers Cotterets. It is autumn, and the leaves are beginning to turn; the forest laments, for fallen trees and charred scrub and heather still mark the ruthless march of the Germans as they pursued the Allied Powers towards the river Marne. The mother, an English mother, is searching for her son who is officially reported 'missing.' She can only ask questions at the mairies, of the gardes-champêtres, of the schoolmistresses, in the desolate hamlets through which she passes. She can only peer into the little pencilled inscription, attached to a tiny wooden cross which sometimes marks a soldier's grave, or try to read the German words, hurriedly written on the blazed

trunk of a tree, indicating that 'Here lie the bodies of British soldiers who perished on the field of battle.' But all in vain; she can learn nothing of her only son; he is 'missing.'

This is a true story, and it led to the creation of the 'Wounded and Missing' Department of the British Red Cross Society, with which I have had the good fortune to be associated since its beginning. The conception of this new branch of activity was due to the sympathetic imagination of Lord Robert Cecil, who presided over its work until he joined the Coalition Ministry last May. Like many other good inventions, it became an absolute necessity before many days were past. No sooner was its existence discovered than long files of mourners visited the new department to try to get help to find their husbands or sons or brothers who were lost. Thither, too, came letters and telegrams, first by the score and then by the hundred, all burdened with the same piteous refrain: 'Where is he? can you not help us?' The following is a sample of thousands of communications which by this time have reached us:

DEAR SIR,—

I am a very poor woman and want to know how much it would cost to try and find my

husband. He was officially reported 'missing' two months ago and I am heart-broken as I can hear nothing of him. Sir, do you think he is dead or can he be a prisoner in Germany or somewhere else? Please will you try and find out for me and his children.

It may be of some interest to the hundreds that we have been able to help, to know something of the method that was devised to obtain news of missing members of the British Expeditionary Force.

The first necessity was to make sure that the man was not in hospital somewhere in Paris or in France, and for this purpose a daily list of admissions into every hospital was an essential preliminary. If you can imagine how terribly understaffed the clerical departments of all the hospitals were at that time, and that typists were practically non-existent in them, you will realise how deeply grateful we were to those who gave us one of their precious lists in manuscript. Some hospitals simply could not furnish us with them, but they let us go in at stated hours to copy the names from their books; all helped us according to their ability when once they discovered the purpose of our request. Then came the work of card-indexing all these names and comparing

them with the enquiries ; none but our devoted secretariat know how monotonous this never-ending labour was at the beginning, when the staff was small and the lists were of appalling length. The reader may well say, 'But why was all this necessary ? Surely a man writes home as soon as he gets into hospital, or asks somebody to write for him.' The answer simply is that, in a large majority of cases, he does nothing of the kind : that is one of the curious phenomena of this war. Whether it is that he thinks the War Office will already have notified his whereabouts to his relatives at home, or whether he does not want to cause them anxiety by learning that he is wounded, I do not presume to guess ; but a very short experience of hospital visiting is sufficient to prove the truth of what I am saying ; both in the cases of officers and men.

Now we return to our methods for finding 'Missing,' when they did not appear on the hospital lists. Gradually Lord Robert Cecil gathered round him a group of men whom we called 'searchers.' These were allocated to the different hospitals and received permits from the Officers Commanding to visit at convenient hours. Each took with him his 'Missing' list, and got

into conversation with regimental comrades of the particular man of whom news was wanted. He would go, for example, to the bedside of a Sherwood Forester or an Irish Fusilier and ask him if he or any of his company knew what had happened to (say) Sergeant X. of the same regiment, who was reported 'Missing' after such and such an action on a given date. Sometimes, of course, the man was too nerve-racked for us to attach real value to his answers; sometimes he 'thought,' but was not quite sure, that this or that had happened. In other cases, he remembered quite distinctly, and no amount of kindly cross-examination could shake him. 'I saw him killed close by me and helped to bury him,' or 'I was one of the stretcher-bearers who carried him to the dressing-station,' or 'He was one of a lot who got left behind and was taken by the Germans.' All this information was carefully noted, taken back to the office to be typed and filed; then it was compared with evidence about the same man collected in other hospitals by other searchers, and, if three or four independent witnesses gave the same evidence, the news was sent to those who were anxiously waiting for it. That was, in rough outline, the system which experience

showed us was attended with the best results: with slight modifications, it has been adhered to as the Department has developed.

Later in October, when the British Army left the Aisne and departed into Northern France and Flanders, our wounded were no longer sent to Paris, but the bulk of them went into hospital at Boulogne and in that neighbourhood. Simultaneously the Red Cross moved its head quarters from Paris to Boulogne and there we opened a branch of the Enquiry Department shortly afterwards. Here the difficulties were greater, from our point of view, than formerly; for, alas! the hospitals (I think there were sixteen in the Boulogne area alone at that time) could not accommodate the train-loads that were for ever coming down from the Front, and men were constantly being transferred to hospital-ships to free the beds at the base. This, of course, made it difficult, indeed almost impossible, for our searchers to find and to visit hundreds of men who might have been able to give us information, since there was hardly time for us to find out that they were in Boulogne and to reach the hospital before we learned that they had been sent back to England. The only chance was

to have a searcher ready to visit each ship as it was filled, and to gather such news as he could from the invalids in their bunks before the anchor was weighed for home. By the end of the year Boulogne was full, and Rouen became the next great hospital centre; so in January we opened yet another branch there, to explore that large field for enquiry. There, besides in the hospitals, a great deal of first-rate information was gathered from men in the reinforcement camps, on their way back to rejoin their regiments after recovery from wounds received early in the War. Our staff often mentioned with special joy the evidence they got from non-commissioned officers who had brought back their old diaries, containing records of casualties at Mons or Le Cateau, which occurred under their eyes and which, but for these entries, must have passed from their memories.

During the present summer, we have installed a fourth branch at Le Tréport, a fifth at Etaples, a sixth at Havre, a seventh in Malta, and an eighth at Alexandria, with a Head Office now in London¹—all working on the same lines to help to alleviate

¹ *This Office (at 31 St. James's Square, S.W.) is now the Central Clearing House for all information gleaned at home and abroad. It has a very large staff to deal with enquiries and is furnished with full lists of prisoners as they are received from Germany.*

the untold agonies of suspense that torture the families of the 'Missing.' I am sure it is only the deep pleasure of assisting, by a 'find,' to relieve one single aching heart that enables our searchers to continue this work for months at a time, steeped as they always are in an atmosphere of pain, and listening for hours to stories of heroism and tragedy that will never be surpassed. Here and there they come across an incident that lightens the darkness of the day. One searcher told me of a surgical ward in which a cricket-match was already arranged, though the date had not yet been fixed, between an eleven of 'left legs' and a team of 'right legs'; another was greatly amused by a story he had been told by a man suffering from a gunshot wound in the body. The doctor who had to examine him was an eye-specialist by profession. The man's wound did not appear to interest him nearly so much as his eyesight. 'Rather defective, is it not?' queried the doctor. 'Please look at my side,' suggested the patient. 'Certainly, certainly, in a moment; but believe me, what you need is a good pair of spectacles.'

But such incidents are few and far between; when they do occur they carry the searcher through many a bad quarter of an hour.

WOUNDED

At the beginning of this chapter, I have described the method by which in Paris we were able to get hospital lists in order to be able to answer enquiries. That was at a time when there was only about a score of hospitals for British wounded in France, whereas now there must be close upon a hundred of one sort and another. There is, therefore, a different kind of enquiry to deal with which occupies a great deal of our time ; it comes from the anxious relative who writes or telegraphs to know in which of all these hospitals so-and-so is lying. The information that A. B. is wounded has reached his home, through the War Office or some other source ; but whether he is in a Clearing Hospital or at Boulogne, at Rouen or Versailles, or elsewhere, may not be stated. There is, I believe, some official difficulty in letting A. B.'s exact whereabouts be known, but I have never been able to understand wherein it lies. In French hospitals, with the exception of Clearing Hospitals which are up at the Front, no such difficulties exist. Whenever a patient is admitted, there is an Army regulation that the principal medical officer shall send a postcard within twenty-four

hours to his next-of-kin, stating the nature of his wound and how he is progressing; more than that, a further postcard is dispatched every seventh day after his admission, so that the family's anxiety is reduced to a minimum. Obedience to this order is strictly enjoined, and the doctors tell me that they obey it gladly, seeing that it adds but a fraction to their existing work, gives immense satisfaction to, and involves practically no further correspondence with, distressed relatives at home. I should much like to see the same scheme adopted in all our hospitals, instead of leaving it to the option of the wounded man to communicate with his family from an unnamed hospital 'somewhere in France.'

Such a plan, with all its other advantages, would incidentally relieve our Department of a duty which it is very difficult to carry out. Indeed, it would be impossible but for the existence in Paris of a most useful branch of the War Office, called the Record and Casualty Office, under the command of Colonel Netterville Barron, R.A.M.C. This Department¹ receives daily lists of admissions and evacuations from every base hospital in France which tends the British wounded, together with

¹ Closed in July 1915.

the medical officer's observations upon each case. The vast amount of information there received is dealt with by a large body of workers in an incredibly short space of time. Each case has its own card, containing the full history of the casualty (from a medical point of view) from the moment it reaches hospital until the man is either sent home or returns to duty, and each card finds its alphabetical place in one of a hundred volumes ranged round the walls of the office. The Wounded and Missing Department, which is allowed access to these files, can thus find out with the minimum of labour where A. B. or X. Y. is lying, and can also give relatives a rough indication of the nature of the casualty which has brought a man into hospital. But this Record Office has also great statistical value for the present and the future ; since it contains material for tabulating the diseases which affect the British Army in the field, according to divisions or brigades or regiments, thereby enabling valuable comparisons to be made and deductions to be drawn concerning the health of troops and the precautions taken (or neglected) in given areas to avoid preventible disease. Other help, which is most generously given to us, comes from the Third Echelon at the base, which receives daily

the official lists of casualties from the Front ; from the French War Office, lists of such of our wounded as have found their way temporarily into French hospitals, with tables of names of British prisoners in hospitals in Germany. And, last but not least, the International Red Cross Society at Geneva has been kind enough, since the end of last year, to forward to us weekly copies of the lists of our fellow-subjects, whether British, Colonial, or Indian born, who are interned in Germany or Austria or Turkey. With all this assistance, and with the help which the head quarters of our department in London receives from the War Office, the American Express Company, and from other public and private agencies, it is our privilege to have been able to console and advise thousands whose appeals, too piteous to reprint, more than justified Lord Robert Cecil in creating, and the Red Cross Society in supporting, this new Enquiry Department.

I hope that this unvarnished recital of the kind of work that we set out to do, and of the methods by which we try to do it, may be of some public as well as personal interest to the many nations now closely identified with Red Cross work. To me it seems that every Red Cross

formation, of whatever country, should have an Enquiry branch attached to it in every centre, just as it has its hospitals or its ambulances, its doctors or its supplies. The Red Cross Organisation throughout the civilised world exists for the relief of suffering in war-time ; but, hitherto, the mistake has been made of limiting its compassion to the victims of battle. If only we could feel that the anguish, great as it is, stopped there ! We know, however that it is far more widespread than this, and that the exquisite pain, endured at home by those who have given all that is dearest to them to fight for their country, can be in some degree relieved and assuaged by such methods as I have tried to record. It is work which should have the approval of every War Office and the support of every Government, as surely as it has received the blessings of thousands to whom it has brought the consolation of definite news to mitigate the haunting miseries of suspense that rival the terrors of death itself.

CHAPTER V

OUR NOBLE DEAD

To Find their Graves—‘A Noble Aspiration’—Our Methods—
Assistance from French Authorities—Sympathy Everywhere
—Priests and People—Graves Registration Commission—A
Visit to Meaux—The Soldier’s Cross

IN the preceding chapter, I have indicated the main activities of the Wounded and Missing Enquiry Department. To those who have read thus far, it will not seem strange that we attempted something more—in the direction of softening the grief of those who live to mourn their heroes and to cherish their memories. To this end, it was felt that we might well try to discover and to protect the graves of our dead soldiers who, in the stress of battle, had been hurriedly buried in trenches or by the road-side, in garden or quarry, on the side of a hill or in the depths of the forest. For nothing in life or death, amid all the varied scenes of pain and sorrow in war-time, impresses the mind with so dark a picture of utter loneliness and desertion as does the



THE CEMETERY AT BRAISNE

sight of a soldier's grave standing alone outside some ruined or deserted village, or hidden away in a copse, half-buried by the brushwood, with nothing to mark it but the remains of a tiny flag or a forage cap or a dilapidated cross.

It must be a comfort to our fellow subjects to know that, so far as human power can prevent it, no fate so miserable will overtake the last resting-places of those whom we have loved and lost upon this kindly soil. Both in Northern France and in Flanders, every nerve is being strained to keep a record of the countless graves of those who have died, and are daily dying, that their country's cause may live; to preserve, by tarring or varnishing existing crosses, or by substituting permanent for temporary ones, the myriad humble monuments that glorify the recent battle-fields; and to retain, by painting inscriptions that once were pencilled, an enduring memory of the men who have hallowed the land with their blood. This labour of love we added to the work of our Enquiry Department before the Army was ready to undertake it—'a noble aspiration,' as General Joffre described it in conversation not long ago.

In order that the whole ground upon which

British troops had operated might be covered as thoroughly as possible, we divided it into two large areas. The northern portion was searched and cared for by one of the Red Cross Mobile Ambulance units, under Major Fabian Ware. At considerable personal risk, he and his intrepid staff have reached many a burial place, in consecrated ground or outside of it, and have erected crosses each with a metal tablet bearing the name and regiment of him who lies beneath. The southern district, between the Marne and the Aisne, was assigned to me and my colleagues. Our task was less dangerous to life and limb, but in some ways it was the more difficult. It involved searching a large part of the area covered first by the retirement in August and then by the advance to the Aisne in September. The district was large and the sources of information were few when we began our work, for the villagers and local authorities had for the most part fled from their homes before the German invasion, and only lately have they returned. Still, by quartering the ground thoroughly, and by patient catechism on repeated visits to the same localities, we were able to glean a great deal of definite information; hundreds of graves have been re-

corded and marked, crosses replaced, memorial inscriptions written or renewed. It is not yet possible to say that the bodies in all the graves have been identified, for in many of them large numbers of soldiers' bodies have been buried together : as for instance in a certain forest, where we found ninety lying together in one large pit, seventeen in a churchyard, and ten by a roadside. They had been buried by the Germans after desperate and hurried engagements ; in many cases we could trace the soldier by his pocket-book or disc, but in a number of instances neither of these means of identification could be found. Of the exhumations which, in November 1914, we were occasionally allowed to perform, I prefer to say nothing except that they were carried out most reverently by the local authorities in our presence and, after the necessary examinations had been made, the bodies were re-interred, an English Burial Service was read over them, the graves were marked with crosses, and covered by the villagers with wreaths and flowers.

Gloomy as this work was of necessity, yet it brought us into contact with the most charming side of the French nature, whose sympathy and consideration for our soldiers' tombs knows no

bounds. At that time it was my business to take every precaution that when, in the course of ploughing operations, the bodies of British soldiers were found buried in the beet-root fields and other plains where they had fallen, they should be cared for and transferred to the nearest cemetery. It was a duty easy of fulfilment, for I received not only a promise from the Commander-in-Chief, General Joffre, that I should be informed whenever such battle-fields were being cleared, but also a kind of circular letter from the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefets and Sous-Prefets of the area that concerned me, asking them to give me all possible help towards the performance of a difficult task. As an immediate result of such kindly intervention, it was possible, in the case of every village that I visited, to obtain from the Mayor a *concession perpetuelle* of ground in the cemetery to which our dead may be transferred when the time comes that they may safely be removed from their present resting-places. These concessions were granted in the most willing and yet formal way, by resolutions couched in touching terms and passed unanimously by the local councils. Here let me add for the benefit of those, and they are not a few, who have expressed

the ardent desire that their relatives should not be moved from the places where they fell, that this course, which is above all others preferable in theory, is impossible in practice : it is not safe for the health of the living, whose acres must be cleared against next year and whose water-supply must be kept pure. For this reason we are deeply grateful for the free gifts of plots in consecrated ground of which I have spoken ; the alternative would probably be some general scheme of incineration that would be painful to the hearts of many at home.

But let us be grateful for more than this. In scores of churchyards I have seen splendid strong wooden or iron crosses that will last for a generation, erected by the rate-payers to the memory of our soldiers : the graves carefully tended and decked with wreaths, placed there by French Regiments that have served alongside our men, and with flowers renewed again and again the long winter through. It is worth remarking here that, in all my long and numerous winter journeys through that large area, I never remember seeing flowers in any cottage windows or gardens, yet I cannot recall a single wayside grave upon which some kind heart had not placed

a few fresh flowers to gladden it. Last Easter, I received a letter from a village schoolmaster, which expresses in words the spirit of all that I have seen in this connection ; after referring to other topics, he adds :

‘In France, according to our yearly custom in springtime, we dress [*faire la toilette*] the graves of those who are still dear to us, and on Palm Sunday we decorate them with flowers. I thought it would be nice to treat in the same way the graves of the British soldiers who fell fighting in our parish. So last week my wife attended to them, and yesterday she and many people from this village brought flowers in honour of your gallant fellow countrymen.’

Then, what kindness we have received from the priesthood who willingly consent to allow clergy of another creed to conduct their own Burial Services in the village churchyards, from officers and men of the French Army who have brought us news of graves situated sometimes almost between the trenches ! Let it be said and remembered that there is nothing our Allies will not do to show their devotion to the memory of the passage of the British Army, a feeling that is only second to their passionate admiration for the

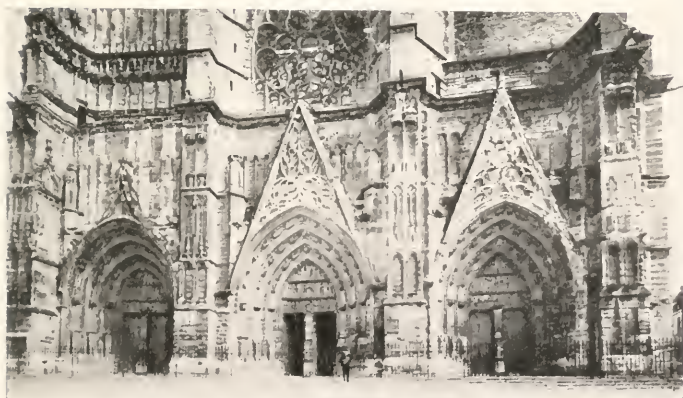
courage and endurance of their own gallant troops. Now all this work of Graves Registration has been taken over by a Military Commission under the Adjutant-General, and to it the Red Cross Society has handed over all its documents. It is well that this should be so, for the Army can, of course, employ a larger staff and obtain wider facilities for search than could properly be granted to any body of non-combatants, however devoted. We have given up this branch of our work with sadness but with confidence, feeling sure that those who have now been chosen to continue and finish the task begun by us are animated by the same motives of inexpressible loyalty to the memory of our dead which impelled us in October of last year to add the function of a Graves Registration Office to the other sad labours of our Enquiry Department.

I cannot close this chapter without some reference to a visit which I paid in Lent to the Bishop of Meaux, the old cathedral city on the Marne, the pivot upon which the chances of war swung round in favour of the Allies last September. I had attended a public meeting in Paris, at which his Lordship was the principal speaker, whose burning description of the Battle of the Marne

created a deep impression upon all who heard it. After the Conference, he was good enough to invite me to Meaux and promised to take me over the battle-field himself. A few days afterwards, I drove out thither with Lord Elphinstone, who was at that time one of my colleagues and generally came with me on our expeditions into the military zone. We arrived at Meaux about eleven o'clock, it lies thirty miles east of Paris, and there at the west end door of the cathedral we saw the Bishop in his purple cassock and biretta talking to a group of the townsfolk, who seem to worship him on account of his magnificent conduct in the dark days. He showed us his cathedral, the scene of some of Bossuet's greatest successes, the palace with its old-world garden laid out by Le Nôtre—but into these precincts he has not entered since the State took them from the Church in 1906—and the many picturesque streets and buildings that combine to make Meaux one of the most charming cities of Old France. After luncheon we motored out into the country, guided by the Bishop's servant who had been taken prisoner for a while by the Germans. The trees that formed the avenue through which we drove towards Varedes were blasted, cut down, withered, and



MONSEIGNEUR EMMANUEL MARBEAU, BISHOP OF MEAUX



THE CATHEDRAL, MEAUX

riddled by shot and shell : the trenches on either side of the road were being cleared and rebuilt, but the houses and the farms must wait to be repaired till the young plasterers and carpenters and stone-masons come back from the War. We passed through several villages, scarred and seared and desolate ; no sign of life in the streets, except perhaps a mounted orderly or a military car going at full speed toward the Front ; for the young men were in the trenches, the old men and all the women were in the fields, the children were at school. And so up to the great plateau above the Marne, which is now a place of pilgrimage. There, as one stands upon the high road that runs across the battle-field, stretch wide hedgeless fields as far as the eye can see. No crop is there but a harvest of crosses, singly and in clusters, and tied to each a storm-tossed little tricolour flag that has been there since All Souls' Day. Do you want a vivid impression of the scene, of the piteous silence and solitude and sorrow that haunts us ? I cannot do better than offer a translation of parts of a beautiful article written in a French newspaper by M. Henri Lavedan, who will, I hope, forgive me for the temerity of my effort :

THE SOLDIER'S CROSS

He was buried where he fell on the battlefield; his comrades, with a few stout strokes from spade or pick-axe, had just time to hew his rugged grave whilst the enemy was advancing. And when they had covered his poor body with a few inches of dear native soil, as the cloak covers the shepherd who has earned his night's rest, they still looked for something to complete the grave. For 'something'; for a *cross*—the crowning ornament of the body's last habitation, without which all graves appear nameless caverns of despair.

To make the cross they do the best they can, with whatever lies nearest to their hands. Twigs are broken from the tree or gathered off the ground—dumb victims of the 'mitrailleuse'—and are tied together with a string or a strap or a bit of wire: perhaps they find two pieces of an old box, or two splinters of a paling, and nail these across one another; anything, everything, has to 'make do.' That is why no two crosses in the blood-stained Valley of the Marne are like one another, each has its own features and its own poetry. Even the smallest one is great with dignity, whether it be of metal or of willow, black or white, strong or weak, capable of resisting all weathers or tottering and nearly vanquished by the winter wind. Some have been driven into the ground so surely that they stand no higher than a good tent-peg; others are bending and insecure, as though the hand which planted them were fearful lest it should inflict yet another

wound upon the dead. For, remember, the soldiers are for the most part buried in their uniforms: there is not oak or pine wood sufficient to shroud the victims of 1914, nor are there carpenters enough to make their coffins.

You see now why it is that battle-crosses fill those who live amongst them with so much anxiety—for the living even more than for the dead. Yesterday they were new, some of them almost robust; but to-morrow, what and where will they be?—the prey of the snow, and of the wind that blows from Germany. Can you not imagine them, scourged by the tempest, waterlogged by the rains, their tired limbs parted as they rot with the dead leaves that already almost hide them. Hourly they begin to droop before the storm; the pencilled name and date are effaced by the tears of Heaven; at last the cross falls, so silently that no sleeper is disturbed, and it is no more seen.

Thence into Barcy, whose fine old village church suffered heavily from the German cannon, its spire torn by the shells, its nave and chancel but a heap of stones. Onward to Chambry and Neufmoutiers and Villeroy, one long Via Dolorosa now, where constantly the Bishop stopped and recited the 'De Profundis' before the soldiers' tombs, but which will be known hereafter as a Path of Glory when history records the gallantry of France at the Battle of the Marne.

As the afternoon wore on, the children came out of school and the labourers returned from the fields. At each village where we stopped the Bishop was the object of charming demonstrations of affection from young and old. Imagine the contrast between the Valley of Sorrow, of which I have been writing, and the picture of this high-spirited Prince of the Church, walking down the roadway of stricken hamlets, a splendid figure in his purple attire, followed by merry children, greeted by smiling faces at the cottage doors, consoling these and encouraging those, scattering little medals of the Virgin among the boys and girls, giving rosaries to the men and women, and receiving the blessings of all. If ever a Bishop earned the gratitude of a whole diocese by strength of character and tenderness of soul, that high reward has been given in abundant measure to the well-beloved Bishop of Meaux.

CHAPTER VI

ON THE ROAD

Red-tape—Passports and ‘Permis’—Soldier Friends—Marching Along—Spy Stories—War in the Air—Men and Women under Fire—The Imperturbables

WHAT is there inherent in the nature of every War Office which, whether you call it red-tape or military discipline, seems to the uninitiated to clog the wheels of the coach whose passengers want to go forward with something approaching speed? I know not; but if it should happen that the majority of the passengers are (as in England) civilians, who have an innate dislike both of discipline and red-tape, then I observe that ‘official methods’ come in for even more than their share of criticism and blame. Even we who are serving the Red Cross abroad—not least in the interests of the military, be it remembered—often find ourselves confronted by what appear to be unnecessary difficulties which accentuate the difference in war-time between professional soldiers and well-meaning civilians.

But, since we find the same international machine dealing out even-handed measure to our Allies as to ourselves, we can only hope that it is all for the best, and recognise that, as we get to understand one another better, the mistrust, or whatever it is, gradually disappears.

Here, for example, is a French doctor of renown, who requires for his military hospital some particular surgical appliances and writes to head quarters for them. The reply comes back, 'Make your application on a printed form'; to which the doctor answers in a second letter that he has no such forms. The Office then enjoins him by post to apply for the said forms, which he does in letter No. 3. Whereupon he receives a further communication saying, 'Make your application on a printed form.' More in sorrow than in anger, he indites letter No. 4 and explains that he cannot apply upon a printed form until is provided with the same. The Office, unmoved, continues the correspondence and tells him to write them a letter asking for a printed form upon which he can make his original request. This he does in letter No. 5, and waits patiently for a document upon which he can without irregularity apply for the papers necessary to enable him to

apply for surgical instruments of which he is in urgent need.

Or shall we give the prize for cautious administration to the Office which appointed a certain gentleman to examine candidates anxious to serve as interpreters in the Army? The professor laboured for some months at the oar, until, being both eligible and keen, he thought that he would like to become an interpreter himself, and so he made the official application. To which the official answer was returned: 'We cannot entertain your request as you have not passed the qualifying examination.'

I confess that I am reminded of these and many similar incidents when I reflect upon the endless and complicated preliminaries which now attend the comparatively simple operation of travelling from Paris to London or vice versa. We are not surprised exactly, for in war-time we know that extraordinary precautions must be taken, preferably at once. But neither do we feel that we are unreasonable in asking that rules once made for regulating and supervising the movements of passengers shall be adhered to for a definite period of time. I have kept no count of the various changes that have been

made, sometimes from day to day, on both sides of the Channel, in passport and *laissez-passer* regulations; but I shall always retain a painfully clear recollection of scenes at one port or the other, when passengers were forbidden to embark on or to leave the ship because their parchments lacked one of the several official stamps which are all necessary to-day (though fewer may have been required yesterday and more may be compulsory to-morrow) before one can land safely in England or in France. And when it comes to applying for a 'Permis de circuler' in a motor-car from Paris to any part of France, except the south, then, believe me, the difficulties are almost insuperable and the chances of entering any part of the zone of military operations are practically *nil*. There is, of course, abundant reason for stern restrictions in this direction; one only wishes that they had been sooner enforced. Even for our own work, of tracing graves, it took six weeks before the 'permits' were forthcoming to pass us into the war-zone, and then only to visit specified districts as authorised by the General-in-command of this or that army.

Having received the much-coveted document, the coast is clear 'on paper.' As long as we adhere

carefully to the routes prescribed there is no more trouble, unless we have a chauffeur who scorns regulations and does not keep a sharp look-out for or tries to rush the guards posted at unexpected places along the road. In that case the whiz of a bullet or, if time permits, a prod with a bayonet is the not unmerited reward, which brings the driver swiftly to his senses, and he is more careful in the future. In some places, to make the matter of examination of permits quite sure, the sentry is assisted by the erection of barricades, consisting of wagons or trees so drawn across the road that one must thread one's way carefully through them. These are particularly awkward to negotiate at night when there is little or no light, except now and then a dim stable-lantern, to warn us of their presence. The sentries themselves are generally delightful, oldish men who are past the age for the trenches. They are genuinely glad to pass the time of day with anybody—especially on the unfrequented roads—and the examination of a permit containing English names and adorned (?) with English photographs becomes a positive diversion. Of course, travelling in a conscript country, one never knows whom one may

meet clothed in the homely, but very picturesque, uniform of a French infantry private. Once, for example, crossing a pontoon bridge—the temporary substitute for a stone one that had been blown up—I met a sculptor-friend who was guarding the passage; on another occasion I found an old acquaintance in journalism, and elsewhere a professor of French whom I had formerly met, I think, in Leeds. But whoever they are, known or unknown, these sentries are charming people, engaged on the dullest, though the most necessary, of occupations—guarding the roads and bridges of the country; I sometimes wonder whether we Englishmen, when National Service comes, will face the irksome duties of patriotism as uncomplainingly as do our French Allies.

Leaving the sentries, we drive northward through village after village, over roads that English motorists have often travelled and praised so much. I have used them frequently in war-time and praise them still; though they have been subjected to the highest of trials—namely, the passage of the troops and of the heaviest kinds of transport for weeks and months—they have stood the strain wonderfully and are still amazingly



AN OLD SOLDIER

By ROBERT NOIR
(Reproduced by kind permission of the Artist)

good. I feel that I know every inch of them now, to Rouen or Boulogne, whether by road or rail: every village is a familiar friend, every culvert and level-crossing a familiar enemy. I have driven over them in snow-blizzards, in torrential rain, and in brilliant summer weather; when the trees were bare, or white with blossom; when we never met a living soul for miles, and when our course was so clogged with troops and convoys that it was impossible to get along. There is something very stimulating in seeing French reserve regiments marching up to the Front, with a gait quite different from the athletic swing of British troops bound on the same grim errand. I notice no elasticity, no 'step' in the masses that I have seen moving forward, but a dogged endurance combined with unconquerable good humour, as company after company, bearded, whiskered, long blue-coated and laden with pots and pans, bread, bottles and accoutrements, plods casually along—now singing, now whistling camp songs, and always greeting a khaki uniform with a merry salutation in French or, quite remarkably often, in excellent English. Every time I meet them I am, of course, reminded of Detaille's great pictures; just as, when I see them singly

or in little groups working or wandering in the leafy forests—their blue tunics and crimson trousers standing out from a background of autumn tints or fresh spring green—I feel that I myself am sauntering through a gallery of Meissonier sketches. These are the men whose ‘troubles,’ so far as trenches and shell-fire are concerned, are in front of them; but they have already had their adventures. A couple of them caught a spy the other night, driving a sham ambulance-car towards an important railway bridge, along a road which was closed to everybody. There were no stretchers inside the waggon, which was empty but for one occupant and a certain quantity of explosives. From what they told me I gather that these gentry are no longer ‘on the road.’ Elsewhere I heard of a so-called Belgian refugee ‘child,’ who had been clothed, fed, and petted by a soft-hearted motherly old French peasant. He was as the apple of her eye, ‘gentle, beautiful, and trusting,’ until she had occasion to look for something in the little cupboard where the darling kept his clothes and she found it locked. The child firmly declined to give up the key, so the cupboard was broken open and papers were discovered which led the

infant from the nursery to the gaol. There must be quite a number of these precocious young rascals in the service of the enemy. I read a story the other day, in a letter from a French officer, of the adventure of a 'chocolate soldier':

He stayed with us for weeks—a fair-haired, timid little urchin about fifteen years old, who limped after us as we left barracks for the Front. The kid with the white wheelbarrow became the friend of the regiment. Whenever we halted he uncovered his wares and sold cakes and chocolate to the men, replenishing his stock in the towns and villages through which we marched.

At last we got news that we were approaching the German lines, and so we advised our young friend to be off, as things were getting too hot for a child. To our surprise he began to cry.

'Where shall I go to? Oh! do keep me with you; I shan't be frightened,' he sobbed. And his tears so moved us that we let him remain.

Our first section advanced to its appointed place, a hollow in a hillside; we dug a trench and waited for the night.

'Where is the chocolate soldier?' I asked.

He and his barrow were nowhere to be seen, but nobody had time to think much about him then. At midnight a perfect storm of shells burst above our trenches—and we knew we were discovered. Of course we retired a bit, but the enemy found us again with his guns in a quarter of an hour. It was maddening.

'Look behind you, sir,' said one of my men,

as he pointed to a little white object on the next ridge. There, by the light of the full moon, I saw the little white wheelbarrow—and then we understood. Off went a patrol after it and flung it into a ditch. There was no more shelling that night, but the fair-haired juvenile spy (who escaped in the darkness) had cost us four of our best men.

This young criminal had only copied, and improved upon, the example of his elder who gave a great deal of trouble at one time with a flock of sheep which he herded carefully in a certain direction and, by the clouds of dust which they made, indicated the exact line of the French guns; he was fortunately detected with his ear to a suspicious telephone, and his sheep are now tended by another shepherd.

But I must pass on to other incidents of the road which never wearies me, for it is never the same for two successive journeys. At Beauvais, which contains two of the most interesting churches in France, I was sitting in a café one bright winter morning, half-frozen with the cold after a two hours' drive from Paris, when, as in a moment, the whole market-place was filled with upturned faces peering into the sky. Intense excitement was in the air, and I ran out to share it. It was

caused by an aeroplane chase or fight, thousands of feet above us, between a Frenchman and a 'Taube,' the most graceful, if not quite the most thrilling, spectacle that modern warfare provides. I have seen many such extraordinary combats since—they can never cease to be extraordinary to people of my generation—but never with quite the same uncontrollable excitement as that which accompanied my first experience of an air-fight. All fear, all curiosity as to whether bombs would fall upon us, was swallowed up in the fever of watching these two large birds circling and swerving, plunging and pursuing, attacking and eluding, until they passed out of our sight into the clouds beyond.

I wonder when the pæan in praise of airmen will be written : of poor young Warneford whose heroic exploit filled the world with his name, and whose coffin, covered with flowers, I saw at Versailles, only two days after hearing him acclaimed by all the diners in a large restaurant in Paris ; of Jean de Castellane, the intrepid French observer, who, lying at full length in his machine, held some loose part of the motor together with his feet for eighty kilometres as his pilot bore him safely over the enemy lines amid a storm of shells ; of the succession of gallant bands of

Allies in the air and their wonderful deeds of daring, from heights to which no warrior in the long history of world-warfare has ever before ascended and at risks and perils un contemplated hitherto even by the bravest of the brave ! What pigmies we groundlings feel when we see, when we read of, these glorious feats of valour so far surpassing anything that we ourselves can hope to attain !

Another and a very decided impression is left upon my mind by a visit to Amiens when first I heard the sound of the cannon—not very distant but continuous. Shall I confess to feeling first of all the satisfaction of an unworthy curiosity—shared, I know, by millions of others who long to hear, if only once, the sound of which they have read so much ? At eight or ten miles it gives one the impression of heavily-padded doors banging incessantly all over a large hotel. But this feeling of curiosity satisfied is swiftly replaced by the truer emotion that brings with it the grim meaning of every one of those far-off explosions : the intention to kill, the bursting of shells in trenches and in villages, the death or maiming of friends or foes by the score and by the hundred, the devastation of property, the desolation of

homes. That is the haunting sensation which finally grips you and never loosens its hold even whilst you are only listening to the distant voice of fate.

Nearer the line these sounds are too familiar ; men and women are too busy or too tired to analyse their feelings or to pay more attention to shells than is necessary to avoid them, if possible. It is remarkable to note how quickly even new arrivals become accustomed to the din and the danger : I do not mean to say that they ever like it, but it does not prevent them eating or sleeping or smoking or working. This always impresses me when I observe the daily demeanour of the rank and file of the new Army whose earlier professions were seldom such as to fit men (one would say) for the scenes and scent of war. But they are composed of such splendid stuff that they step into their new lives 'as to the manner born' and, after a few days, the explosion of a 'Black Maria' is scarcely more disturbing to them than once was the sound of Bow Bells. So, too, with the gallant women who are nursing at the Front ; the religious communities whose lives have hitherto been passed in a tranquil atmosphere of solitude and prayer, the ladies whose names were once associated with all that was brightest in London

Society; the authoresses and actresses and artists who have gladly given up their careers to work wherever they are wanted—all these and hundreds of others serving loyally under the R.A.M.C., whose matrons and sisters and nurses are one and all magnificent, are doing their hospital duty under bombardment as quietly and calmly as if they were in the wards at St. Thomas's or Guy's. Nor are the non-combatant men any less remarkable than their fellows for that sang-froid which seems to come more by instinct than by training: men who have never seen suffering beyond the doors of their own homes are now hourly engaged as stretcher-bearers to and from the trenches, and are in imminent danger of death; men who have never before needed to employ their talents as chauffeurs for purposes less pleasurable than joy-rides through England, are now driving ambulances daily into Ypres and other Flemish villages in flames, risking annihilation at every corner, to rescue and to save. Every one of these names, when known, must be added to the honour roll of Britain's glory. Two stories that have reached me seem to sum up all that can be written about the inexplicable quality known as British 'phlegm.' Mr. Kennerley Rumford, whose Red Cross work is no less admirable than his singing, told me that

on one occasion he was taken into an observation post from which he could see both German and English trenches and mark the wonderful accuracy of the shell-fire. Whilst his eyes were riveted upon the scene before him, he suddenly started at the sound of a full-throated cheer which he thought proceeded from the enemy lines. Turning to his companion he asked if the cheering meant that our lines had been pierced.

‘Oh no,’ replied his friend, ‘not at all; just look out of that peep-hole on the right.’

He looked and saw—a football match in full swing well within range of shells! The cheering came from a large number of spectators elated because their side had just scored a goal!

The other story is told with genuine pride and admiration all down the French lines. A town, in which the Prince of Wales happened to be billeted, was receiving a considerable amount of attention from the German guns. Things became so warm that the kind-hearted landlord of the Prince’s lodgings went into the latter’s room and said, very decidedly: ‘Le prince doit partir d’ici immédiatement.’

His Royal Highness, without interrupting the work upon which he was engaged, quietly replied: ‘Le Prince n’a pas peur.’

CHAPTER VII

SELF-EXAMINATION

‘As Others see Us’—The Martian’s Report—Pleasure and Pessimism
—The Vast Majority—A Spirit of Sacrifice—External Illusions
—The Zouaves on Shirkers

No question put to me by my French friends perplexes me nearly so much as one which I put to myself on the rare occasions when I find myself in London: ‘How much do the people of Great Britain care about the War?’

We are a people who are not supposed to care about praise or criticism from our Continental neighbours, and we are (or were) supposed to take victory or defeat with comparative equanimity. How true is all this now? Let us examine the convenient visitor from Mars who arrives among us in the midst of this national struggle for national existence. What report will he write for the consideration of his government in another sphere? First of all, I suppose, having studied the back numbers of our morning and evening papers, he will be duly impressed by the unity of our

people and its Parliament, and by the heroism and infinite power of endurance in all ranks of the regular Army and Navy. He will marvel at the quite unexpected efficiency of our Territorials, as well he may, and will note the glorious response from all classes of the community to His Majesty's appeal for men. But perhaps our visitor will not be so much overwhelmed as we are ourselves by what he sees in the matter of military training; he will write in his diary: 'After all, they admit that this war is nothing less than a fight to the death—death or life for a great Empire—so I can see nothing surprisingly praiseworthy in the fact that a large number of young men, and a great many old ones, are now banded together to save the Empire which has done everything for them.' If he can be persuaded to talk at all freely, the Martian will probably say, when asked to lecture at the Queen's Hall upon his 'impressions,' that, taken as a nation, we in Great Britain are either childishly ignorant of what our Empire means or else curiously callous as to its fate. I seem to hear him continue:

‘It is not for me, a mere pilgrim from a neighbouring planet, to instruct you, to whom it belongs by inheritance, in the worth of the British Empire

and of the priceless part which it has played in the civilisation of the world. There is no system of decent government which is not in your debt for its parentage; no dark spot upon the earth that has cried to you in vain for succour; no path of science or art or discovery in which you were not pioneers; no country in which the lamp of true liberty has been held higher or has shined more brightly than in your own. The homes of England and her domestic life are the world's pattern; the courage of her ancestors to defend wife and child from all aggression is traditional in every language. Are you not taught these things in your schools? [Cries of 'No!'] Do you not thank God for them, and pray night and morning that you may continue in the footsteps of your forefathers? [Renewed cries of 'No!'] Are you not proud of your matchless heritage? [Shouts of 'Good old England!'] Ah! now I see why you expect all created things to gasp with astonishment because three million of you actually volunteer to defend your Empire and your homes. It is because you don't know either their price or their value; you have only learnt to live *on* the name of England, not to die *for* it. Teachers of young England—priest,

parent and professor alike—it is you who are to blame to-day; for, if you had taught aright, instead of three, *all* the millions that make the manhood of England would be entrained to-day either for an army at the Front or for an arsenal at the rear.’

Let us walk with our visitor down Regent Street and through Whitehall to Westminster and gather his impressions as we go. ‘Look at this poster,’ he exclaims: “‘Has your best boy joined the colours?’”—and on that taxi, “‘Why not join the Army?’”—and at all those pictures on the walls. These are kindergarten lessons for a nation in the nursery of a parvenu, not for a race upon whose Empire we are told that the sun never sets.’ We stop at Regent Circus where a dozen news-sheets are exhibited: ‘Captain Coe’s finals’ upon one, ‘Brides in the Bath’ upon another, ‘Desperate fighting in Flanders’ upon the third. We reach the House of Commons; we find seats under the gallery, we hear some admirable speeches, and some execrable questions which can give information and consolation to none but our enemies. Our friend remarks: ‘If I were the Secretary of State for War, I should give a commission to every Member of Parliament and second

him for service at Westminster. If his conduct interfered with the conduct of the War he would be court-martialled and punished on the spot.' In the outer lobby we meet a number of men who have just left a Minister's room, and we learn that a coal strike has been averted in one part of the country, whilst in another part the operatives decline to take their share in some national movement for the safety of their native land. The Martian notes all these extraordinary happenings in his book, with a view to reporting them hereafter to his chief, and finishes the day by an hour's talk at the Club with men of all professions who are alternately critical and depressed at the condition of things at the Front, but who nevertheless go off to dinner at the usual hour in a restaurant where there is a good orchestra playing Hungarian dances 'to cheer us up.'

'How much do the people of Great Britain care about the War?' That is the question which I feel that I must answer to myself. Upon the one hand I have all the evidence of ears and eyes that have heard and seen the things which I have just related. These point to one conclusion: that there is in Great Britain a certain class, or group of classes, which has not



‘SI J’ÉTAIS À LA PLACE DE JOFFRE’

By OCHS

(Reproduced by kind permission of the Artist.)

yet appreciated the full meaning of a life-and-death struggle, of the appalling difference between national existence and national extinction : their circumstances are still too comfortable for them to believe it, their imagination too limited for them to grasp it. When they have paid up their increased taxation and settled their weekly house-bills they feel they have done all that they can do ; there is something spiritual lacking in them. Would they strike, for example, for higher wages if they knew and believed that *upon the issue of this war* depends the answer to the question whether or not they shall in the future have any wages at all ? Would they hesitate to join the national movement for the mobilisation of industry if they realised that by so doing they would enfeeble the sword-arm of our country, and so become associates with the enemy in their murderous raids upon the defenceless by sea and land ? Others there are whose lot in life has become comparatively easy, perhaps after a hard struggle, and who say, when asked to join a regiment, 'I'll wait a bit ; I'll come when I am fetched.' I cannot and will not blame them, for they have never been taught (as have the Germans and the French) what the Motherland means ; if

they had learnt this they would not wait to be 'asked,' still less to be 'fetched,' to fight for her whose children they are. Others, again, the pessimists (*les poltrons de l'arrière*, as the French so rightly call them) swell the group who give the false impression abroad that England is not wholly in earnest. Sometimes they write in the newspapers, sometimes they preach sermons, and they abound in club-land. Whatever they do and wherever they are, they are a danger and ought to be suppressed; we have quite enough serious and real grounds for anxiety in this war to entitle us to ask for protection against the alarms and inventions and mischievous forebodings of such useless people. They, too, are bound in honour to ask themselves this question, whilst the sons and husbands of their friends are falling every day, 'Are my prophecies and criticisms helping to win this war for my country?' If not, then whilst others are holding the trenches let them hold their tongues. We have only to add to the above catalogue the small class of heartless and inveterate pleasure-seekers, who would bring as much discredit on any army that they tried to enter as they do on the country that will disown them, to conclude the number

of those who make it appear that Great Britain is not serious enough in this war.

On the other hand there are the silent millions whose spiritual conception of a war for existence is complete. It may have come through instinct or sorrow or knowledge, but it compels them to make a whole-hearted sacrifice of themselves, their lives, and their fortunes until the War is over. They are the backbone of the country; their hearts are mourning for their dead, but they know no pessimism; though their homes are desolate, and their domestic life is wrecked, they spend their days in organising relief for sufferers at home or abroad; their substantial incomes are reduced to a shadow upon which they are cheerfully resigned to live. Rich and poor are of the same estate now, bearing one another's burdens as equal heritors of misery and hope. It is with these, drawn by the hundred thousand from every class in the social scale, that the enemy must reckon when counting up his chances of outlasting us; with these, whose numbers and inspiring influence increase as the power of the self-satisfied and the morbid passes. Often enough already has Germany been deceived by outward signs and portents in our domestic life, to which

her counsellors have attached a wholly erroneous significance—let the instance of possible civil war in Ulster last July stand for a warning and an example. And let our Allies take the same lesson to heart: the foundations of our national endurance do not rest upon the evidence of news-sheets or placards, or upon the untimely disaffection of a well-defined class here and there, but rather upon the grim and irresistible determination of the vast majority of our fellow countrymen and women to win this war with and for our friends, and to have done with a world-danger once and for all. I come, then, to this definite conclusion that, in spite of most depressing appearances to the contrary, our people are in desperate earnest; and every day I seem to notice a growing impatience with dilettantism and inefficiency in high places, which emboldens us to expect yet greater things of our country as the War proceeds.

But until we realise that, in this imperfect world, there will always be some people ready to judge a whole nation by the eccentricities (or worse) of a minority, we must be prepared for the criticism that England is not serious. Our only chance of escaping it, is, by example and precept, to reduce that minority to vanishing-

point. And even then we must admit, as I have said before, that the outward and visible signs of our inward and spiritual determination to win require a certain amount of explanation before foreigners can be expected to recognise them as satisfactory symbols. Let me illustrate what I mean: the German soldiers advance in close formation to certain death, chanting 'Deutschland über alles'; the French strip and start for the enemy trenches with incomparable dash, singing the Marseillaise; the British charge in the face of maxims and barbed wire shouting 'Front seats, sixpence.' Again: we have all read the wonderful accounts, written home by French soldiers, of their thoughts and feelings when they lay wounded on the field of battle, simple letters inspired by love of country and family and home; but, when a friend of mine in Ireland asked a wounded fellow countryman what he thought about before the stretcher arrived to pick him up, the Ulsterman replied: 'Sure, your Honour, I was thinking what a grand training it is for the great fight we shall have in Ireland when this is all over.'

I am not sure that I could give to anyone, even to myself, any satisfactory explanation of

this curiously detached point of view, which is essentially British. It might be different if war were our staple national industry as it is in Germany; it would certainly be different if our country were invaded, as are France and Belgium, and if the horrors of war glared through our cottage windows and fired the buildings in our ancient English towns; but it is what it is—our soldiers' own particular mode of expression and thought, and nobody has yet said that it hinders them from fighting like lions.

But, after all, such criticism as we receive from our good Allies across the Channel is as milk compared to the strong and bitter invective which they hurl in torrents at their own *embusqués*—the shirkers and wasters who decline, on some flimsy pretext or another which is just inside the law, to 'do their bit.' The other day I came across a letter written in one of the brilliant little broadsheets which are published at the Front. This appeared in the *Chéchia*, the 'organ' of the First Zouaves, and was addressed from the trenches to an anonymous civilian friend who seems to have written complaining of the tedium of life nowadays in Paris; for polished irony it is hard to beat:

DEAR OLD MAN,—

What can have happened to make you so chastened and cast down; you of all people who used to be so cheery and full of fun? Of course I know that life in Paris cannot be exactly a bed of roses, but, after all, you have stood it bravely for nearly a year, and have given us all an example of courage and endurance and devotion which we admire from end to end of the fighting-line. Don't give up now and destroy all those feelings of respect which we cherish for you and of which you must be proud.

Yes, times *are* hard, but not quite intolerable, are they? What do you complain of? They 'have taken away the motor-buses' from you; so they have from us, as they aren't much use in the trenches. But why should you care? You were always a splendid walker and I seem to remember that, when Paris was crawling with them, you used to say that you would rather go on foot than climb up into one of these 'infernal bathing-machines.' Then you tell me that there are so few plays to go to, that a glass of beer now costs a halfpenny more than it did last year, that the town is dreadfully dark at night, and that the Boulevards are full of soldiers in uniform.

I am bound to say that we *are* better off than you in these respects. We have a number of dramas out here, full of the unexpected sometimes; we get our share of wine and beer—now and then; as for illumination at night-time that is amply provided by a sort of tacit understanding with our neighbours across the line; but, like you, we

too see a good many uniforms in the course of the day. Cheer up old fellow, your turn is coming, and you will soon be with us in the trenches, if only you will be patient: the War is not over yet, by any means.

But even if you are compelled to stay at home all the time, console yourself with the thought of how we shall thank you for your doggedness when we get home, and how you will enjoy the fruits of victory! Our first duty should be to pay you an official visit of thanks; but I know you will come out to meet us, and march in front of us through the gates of the city; you will escort us through the town and spoil us, but you won't let fall a syllable about your own courage, for heroes are always modest. On the contrary, you will pretend that it is we who have won the War and have suffered, and you will thank us. But it won't do, old boy; you are a better fellow than you would have us believe, and I am sure that, however long the War may last, you, at least, will remain at your post in Paris till the end.

Ever yours,

* * *

The truth is that no system and no nation is as perfect as it thinks it is, and the supreme test of war reveals flaws, where least they were expected, to those from whom we would have wished particularly to hide them. But, if there is any consolation to be derived from observing the deficiencies of our neighbours whilst smarting under the lash

of exposure ourselves, that at least is to be had for the asking. The trail of politicians, the bane of the wastrel, the danger of the self-complacent—these are maladies in every country, they are the monopoly of none. Victory will belong to the side which is the quickest to purge itself of such grievous ills, for wars are won by courage, cannon, and discipline ; and the greatest of these is discipline.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RAVAGE OF WAR

Chantilly and Senlis—A Pilgrimage of Passion—‘Souvenirs’—
The Prince at Béthisy—Néry—In the Forest—Villers-Cotterêts
—A Woodland Cemetery—Dead Letters

I HAVE already said that from almost the beginning of the War until the summer of 1915, my work led me constantly into the zone of the Armies and sometimes to the battle-field itself. I suppose we must have visited nearly two hundred villages in the course of our expeditions through the area that lies between the rivers Marne and Aisne, when we were searching for our soldiers' graves. In this way one came across much that gave a steady insight into the feelings of the people, both military and civilian, as well as a striking picture of what invasion means. My first journey was to Senlis on a fine morning in autumn, and the road led through Chantilly, the Newmarket of France. Outside this prosperous little town we overtook an English trainer riding on his cob beside a string of race-horses coming home from

exercise. 'Fine day,' said he, 'the guns began playing early this morning; you can hear them quite plainly now.' That was a characteristically British phrase, 'guns . . . playing'; but we could certainly hear them booming across the clear frosty distance. What a strange impression, an odd clashing of ideas: race-horses and artillery in action! The whole scene at Chantilly was so calm and serene that it was almost impossible to realise that the Germans had actually been there only six weeks before. It was much less difficult when, eight kilometres farther on, we reached the little town of Senlis which had suffered so terribly from a three days' occupation by the Huns that the main street seemed a replica in miniature of Messina directly after the earthquake. That a city, however beautiful and prosperous, can be laid waste in a moment by a convulsion of nature is bad and sad enough; but, to me at least, the prospect of Messina was not so indescribably shocking as this, my first evidence of uncivilised war. The impression deepened as one talked with the inhabitants who were beginning to start life afresh in their own homes. Some had been held as hostages, others tried for their lives by a sort of sham court-martial

—all had been terrified and horror-stricken by the brutal methods of brigandage of which they had been the innocent victims. Imagine Bury St. Edmunds, let us say, treated as the Germans served Senlis: both towns have had shells dropped in the market-place, but that was only the beginning of trouble for Senlis. The station was burnt to the ground; its principal street contained some 150 houses, of which 105 were deliberately set fire to and destroyed; the shops were plundered, the cellars ransacked; the mayor deliberately murdered under the pretence of a military execution, and six working-men were assassinated—to say nothing of many who were shot in the streets as they ran to protect their families from a German carnival of lust and hate. None cared to speak of these things above a whisper; but it was an honour to meet M. Mader, the gallant old employé in the Maison Février, who, by his unbending attitude and knowledge of German, saved himself and six others from the death to which they had been condemned; and to have speech with the famous Curé of Senlis, whose rare example of courage and devotion inspired his flock and impressed his foes. He showed us over his famous church

and pointed out the damage done by the shells to its towers—happily not beyond repair. I asked him where he was while the bombardment was going on. He said: ‘Up in the belfry watching it, so that I could indicate to my parishioners the safest road for flight when necessary. I had the keys of the church in my pocket lest any should say that there were guns mounted on the towers. But they were bad shots, monsieur,’ he added with a twinkle, ‘luckily for me.’

That night I slept in the Hôtel du Grand Cerf, the one building of any size left standing in the main street, because it made a very comfortable head quarters for the General of the Division responsible for these atrocities. On each bedroom door and on the walls the names of various officers were scrawled in red chalk; they had broken into the wine-cellars and stolen the food and household linen, leaving behind them a packet of I O U papers,¹ which is all the payment that the unfortunate landlady is ever likely to see. The next morning we were off betimes, but not too early to be accosted by a youth anxious to sell us ‘war souvenirs’ in the shape of bits of shell and other doubtful oddments. I am

¹ See next page.

thankful to say that this trade is almost a thing of the past, for it has been made a military offence, I believe, to traffic in these casual spoils of war. People who were in Paris directly after the battle of the Marne tell me that in those days parties were made up to wander over the fields 'curio-

P. 4. July. le 3 9. 14

*Fin d'itin. pour les armes. Reg. des fait
20 Jalt. n. 5 gauge. Flapp. Champagne
Mg. n. n. n.*

*Tholomay
Abert. d. Reg. d. d. d.*

hunting'—a morbid and revolting sport. It is one thing to be the receiver of honourable trophies of war taken from the enemy by a friend, but quite another to barter for helmets and swords and guns—as though one could ever be proud of purchases stained with so much of our country's blood; the mere sight of such things, so acquired, in a shop or a drawing-room at home is an insult

to our dead, and makes me doubtful whether their possessors will ever realise anything of the hideousness of war until it beats against their own doors. I remember one occasion when, in a country village that had been the scene of carnage, I heard a lady ask one of the inhabitants if he thought he could get her a German helmet as a 'souvenir' to take home to her little boy! Never shall I forget his look of astonishment at such a request: his house had been seized and occupied by the enemy and, after the engagement, two helmets had been left behind, and here was somebody asking him for a 'souvenir.' With great readiness and frigid politeness he produced them, saying: 'Prenez, madame, lequel vous voulez de ces couverts de cochon.' Now, for all I know, this horror is the ornament of a nursery or is brought out to be played with on Sundays. There is only one collection of such things—besides that in the 'Invalides'—for which I have any respect. It is a very imposing trophy in the Hôtel Crillon in Paris, composed of all sorts of booty taken from the enemy by old employés of the hotel who are now fighting with the colours and exhibited for the benefit of the families they have left behind.

Beyond Senlis, in the direction of Compiègne,

is a group of picturesquely situated villages, in all of whose cemeteries there are monuments of our brave dead who have fallen in the course of the retreat to the Marne. At Béthisy St. Martin we found the villagers still in a fever of excitement over the recent visit of the Prince of Wales, who had gone there to decorate some doctors and nurses who had tended our soldiers last September. We lunched in a village inn with one of the *décorés*, who was loud in praise of the manner in which the Prince had conducted the little ceremony, and the schoolchildren showed us the flags with which they had been provided for the festival. Above Béthisy there is a high hill where stands the farm of St. Cluse. We wanted to get up there to see some graves, and the way was shown us by a charming young girl, the daughter of the schoolmaster I think, who had been in England when war broke out, but got back to her village in time to see the Germans in it. With her we climbed the hill, which was a steep ploughed field at the time, and reached the graves at the summit. There we saw a sight, by no means rare but very grateful to British eyes, which always gives me a thrill—three French privates in uniform, laying flowers upon these



THE SOLDIER'S CROSS

two lonely graves, saying a little prayer, then quietly saluting and going away. They were at first quite shy at being surprised in this touching act of comradeship, explaining that they were natives of one of the villages below and, as they were home for a few hours' leave, they seized the first opportunity of paying their respects to the memory of men who had died for them in their parish.

Not far from here is the village of Néry, through which I have passed several times. It consists of one long street with a sugar refinery at the far end of it, and was the scene of desperate fighting at dawn on September 1, 1914, when the Germans, under cover of a heavy mist, crept up the hill and surprised two or three British regiments who were resting there. Our men were billeted about in the farms and with the villagers; they were just rising to begin the day's work when it was discovered that a greatly superior force was upon them. The enemy-artillery opened fire from a mile off, our cavalry rode out and captured the battery from both flanks, men dashed into the street in shirt sleeves, many with shaving-soap on their faces, to find that the Germans were advancing behind the

usual screen of thirty civilians with the Mayor of Néry at their head. It is very wonderful to hear him tell this story, and then to meet some of the men and women who had been forced to make a living shelter for a contemptible foe. The nerves of nearly all of them were completely shattered by this gruesome adventure, some were seriously ill, and a few, it is feared, will never recover ; but those with whom I spoke—especially a charming couple, M. and Mme. Nicolas—could not sufficiently praise the conduct of the British officers and men on that eventful morning. The unanimous opinion was that, if the Germans could have fought like our men, there would not have been one Englishman left. As it was, the German guns were destroyed, many prisoners were taken, the British dead were collected so far as possible and buried in the cemetery, and Néry remained for many days a hospital for wounded friend and foe alike. Madame Nicolas made a wonderful nurse ; her little house was full of British casualties upon whom she waited day and night until they could be moved. Now she makes herself responsible for the upkeep of the graves, and she has but one complaint—which I have often heard from other devoted French

women under similar circumstances: it is that she does not know the names of those whose last earthly homes she is tending as affectionately as though they were the tombs of her own children. One large grave which we opened contained twenty-one bodies: we were able to identify the four officers, but not the men whose discs, it was said, had been removed by some doctor in the Army Medical Service. Doubtless, therefore, these names are known at the War Office; but it would have been a better plan in this case, as in scores of others that came under my notice, to have left at the various 'mairies' lists containing the names of those whose bodies we had placed in charge of kind-hearted Allies after we ourselves had left the neighbourhood. Such a procedure, besides being courteous and wise, would have had the further advantage of providing a duplicate list for guidance, in the event of anything untoward happening to the original or its possessor.

From Néry it is not far to Compiègne where there was also a certain amount of fighting on September 1. There, too, our graves are kept in admirable order by the town authorities who have compiled a careful register of names at the Town Hall, where, by the way, I was fortunate

enough to meet a casual visitor who told me that he was in correspondence with an Englishman in China whose brother's grave, under a tree by the roadside at Choisy-au-Bac, he had undertaken to protect. At every turn one comes across French people ready and anxious to help and console the relatives of our fallen; it would surprise you if I could enumerate the number of village people I have met who either are or have been writing to English families about the last hours or the graves of their sons. Many most charming letters, often with photographs taken at the peasant's expense, have passed through my hands to be forwarded from these good Samaritans to England, where they have been received with the deepest gratitude.

And now we follow the line of the British Army that retired from Compiègne through miles of forest upon Villers-Cotterets. The guns are very audible from here, as they boom across the river. But, in the solitude of the forest, what a picture of peace! Here and there we drive through picturesque villages in sleepy hollows, and one charming scene after another passes before our eyes: the dragoons are watering their horses, the children stand open-mouthed as African troops

in strange attire ride lynx-eyed down the street, a dusty war-stained convoy of fifty hooded-wagons distributes its load of rations and then plods wearily on to the next town, two girls are kneeling in prayer before the large Crucifix at the entrance of the village, two infantry soldiers are lazily fishing in the stream by the mill. Here I meet an old priest who takes me into his church which, not long since, was hospital and mortuary at once ; he shows me the graves of thirteen British soldiers buried by the Germans outside the churchyard wall. Each grave is guarded by the outspread arms of a strong wooden cross, covered with flowers and honoured by large wreaths of metal flowers placed there by their French comrades in arms. Elsewhere, I interrupt the afternoon class of a village school to make some enquiries of the mistress who was imprisoned by the Germans during their stay in the neighbourhood and who still suffers from the effects of her treatment. She gives me the names of a wine-seller here and of a *garde-champêtre* there who may be able to help me to more knowledge, and an afternoon passes very quickly in patient conversation with these and the like who lived through those days of terror. These are the very people who, before the fighting in the

Villers-Cotterêts forest, gave our soldiers breakfast and with their own arms buried many of the same men on the same evening: their interest in and anecdotes of the men they knew afford ample evidence to the splendid behaviour of our troops on the march. It is almost with tears that they give me the identity discs, the soldiers' pocket-books, letters and other possible sources of identification for which I am looking: these things had become so dear to them. A blacksmith brings me a broken sword—I can trace its owner by the number on the blade and the name of the maker; another friend produces a staff-officer's cap and a pair of field glasses, another a saddle and a pair of spurs: all these are now restored either to the owners or to their families or to the War Office. As we get near to the town of Villers-Cotterets our guide begs us to leave the road and to follow him into the forest. He knows where the Germans buried the dead after the engagement: who should know it better?—for was he not one of those prisoners to whom was allotted the awful task of collecting bodies all through the night and placing them in graves prepared for them by the soldiers? There they are, within quite a small area, indicated only by little mounds of earth and,

upon the trees above them, by some German words written to show whether friend or foe is lying underneath. Round the largest of these mounds is a strong wooden railing upon which hang twenty wreaths of evergreens. Upon the cross at the head of the tomb is written :

ICI REPOSENT 20 SOLDATS ANGLAIS
DU 4ME REGIMENT DES GUARDS, MORTS
COURAGEUSEMENT A L'ENNEMI
SEPT. 1914.

And upon the nearest tree I made out the following inscription, drawn up probably on the following day :

HIER RUHEN UMGEFÄHR 20 EHRENVOLLE
ENGLÄNDER 4TH GUARDS.

During a later examination, however, it was found that a far greater number than twenty had been buried at this spot ; so the grave was properly enlarged, a touching military funeral was provided by the officers billeted in the neighbourhood, prayers were read over the bodies by Anglican and Roman Catholic priests, and ' we left them alone in their glory.'

At Villers-Cotterets I was billeted for a couple of nights in very comfortable quarters over a grocer's shop, finding excellent rations and

interesting company at the Hôtel de la Chasse. It was quite touching to note the interest which people of all classes took in our sad mission, and the pains to which they went to help us in every way. 'Do you know the graves on such and such a by-road, on so-and-so's farm, in Mme. X.'s garden? I will take you there to-morrow.' In this kind of way I believe we found and saved many a grave which might, in time, have been abandoned to its fate. We also visited the hospital, where we found in the register the names of two soldiers who had died of their wounds, but to whom letters were still being addressed from home. In order to be able to break the sad news it was, of course, necessary to open the letters and so learn the name of the senders; no duty was ever so painful, and seldom have I read in poetry or prose anything more heart-rending than these supplications for tidings, blended with remorse for past failings and gentle upbraidings for persistent silence, written long after the beloved hands had been folded in sleep for ever.

Of the bitterness of war to combatants I have already seen enough to make me marvel at their heroism in danger and their indifference to death. But the pathos of letters, such as those to which

I have referred and scores of others, is enough to make me think that probably the fierce and fearful sensations of men in action are as nothing compared to the agonies endured by the silent watchers at home, the mothers and wives and lovers who have sent their best in God's keeping to the Front.

‘He has given his life for his country,’ said a poor woman at the hospital bedside of her dead husband. ‘I cannot complain; France was his mother, I was only his wife.’

CHAPTER IX

TOWARDS THE FRONT

La Ferté-sous-Jouarre—Joint War Monuments—A Famous Abbey
—In a French Hospital—Allied in Sorrow—The Commandant
at Fère—An Amusing Incident—On ‘Joy-riding’—Fismes
and the Sentry—Under Fire—A Concert in a Clearing Hospital
—Mass before Action

LA FERTÉ-SOUS-JOUARRE is a charming little town on the Marne in which there was some desperate fighting to drive the Germans back towards the Aisne. The whole length of the river front, once occupied by picturesque houses, is now a mass of ruins—dumb witnesses to the accuracy of the fire from British guns that operated from the hills to the south; the bridge also was blown up, so that the inhabitants will have every cause to remember the fight of last September for some time to come. The first time I visited La Ferté a German ‘taube’ was hovering over it for some unknown reason. It can have observed very little, except that the inhabitants were gradually recovering from bombardment and brigandage, for a more innocent open town it is

impossible to imagine ; it is not fortified, even to the extent of a hospital or a really historic church.

I had met the Abbé some weeks previously at Meaux, and he very kindly came with us on our round of visits to the neighbouring villages. There had been a great deal of promiscuous burying in this area, and it was most valuable, as well as a great saving of time, to have as our companions two priests so well known as the Abbé at La Ferté and the Curé of Jouarre. With their help we were able to trace quite a large number of graves, but few of them, alas ! bore any names : the most, therefore, that one could do in these circumstances was to ask the local authorities to get substantial wooden crosses to mark the spots in place of the temporary ones that were falling to pieces. This they all consented to do ; but they said that they would not rest content until they had brought our men with their own into the various churchyards, where they will lay them side by side and erect war monuments over them. To defray the expenses of such memorials there is in France a society known as the ‘ Souvenir Français,’ with which I hope some similar organisation in England will get into

touch, and will offer to share the cost, as we shall share the honour, of a joint symbol of Death and Glory. Above La Ferté, on the south side of the river, and at the top of a long steep hill, is the town of Jouarre, famous for its fifteenth-century church, its very ancient crypt, and for its abbey, of which I must sadly confess that I had never heard before, except in connection with the name of Lord Randolph Churchill's mare Abbess de Jouarre. In both the church and the crypt there are a number of most interesting things—gold and enamelled shrines, carved marble columns, exquisitely chiselled sarcophagi and recumbent figures in stone, one of which is said to represent Ste Ozanne, a Queen or Princess of Scotland, whose bones are buried there. I am told that this is not the real name of the Saint; her history has for ages been hidden behind a veil of mystery, which is soon to be raised by the appearance of a work that will disclose her true name and all that can be known about her. The abbey is now a military hospital, in an ideal situation for anything else, with its gorgeous view of the wooded hills and vineyards across the valley; but its inaccessibility to all facilities for transport, whether of wounded or supplies, makes it a constant care to those who are responsible

for its upkeep. One thing, however, struck us immensely—namely, the extraordinary ingenuity of the medical staff in turning the most unlikely materials to profitable use with the utmost economy; they made their own doors and electric lamps and a great many beds of a new pattern out of odds and ends which, I am tempted to think, the R.A.M.C. or the Red Cross would have thrown on to the dust-bin as rubbish. Most of the doctors had been at the Front at one time or another during the War and they told us numbers of capital stories about their men in the trenches. One, for instance, told of the poor fellow who had to be informed that, owing to his wound, he could not go back to the Colours, as he would never be able to lift up his arms again; to which the gallant fellow replied: ‘What does that matter? In our regiment nobody surrenders.’ And, when we were discussing the sort of garments that kind relatives send out to the Front to keep the men warm in winter, another doctor said that he had come across a man with one of those armless waistcoats made out of newspaper. This fellow was sitting quite happily in a trench *reading* it. He observed quite simply: ‘Quand je m’embête je relis mon gilet.’¹

¹ ‘When I am bored, I peruse my waistcoat.’

This tour led us through beautiful country between Jouarre and Coulommiers, every inch of which was fought over last September, where we find our heroes lying in every churchyard and in many a park. Here, as elsewhere, our experience was one of unbroken courtesies and kindness and sympathy. I quote from the Report which I wrote on my return :

In all this region, wherein perhaps more than in any other the French feel that the bravery and skill of the British troops saved them and their country, there is an intense desire to do all that is possible to show not only their gratitude but an emotion very like love for Great Britain. . . . They gladly offer perpetual concessions of land in their cemeteries ; they wish to lay our soldiers beside their own ; they will take any amount of trouble to find and tend our graves in scattered and obscure localities, and they long for permission to gather them into consecrated ground.

Allied in sorrow and sympathy, as in confidence and courage, let us hope that no mistakes will be made upon either side, however trivial on the surface, that may endanger even for a moment the complete harmony of aim, thought, and action, upon which victory depends.

Now turning north again from Coulommiers, almost the most southern point in the retire-

ment, we follow a section of our troops in their advance across the Marne towards the river Aisne. We stop at Château-Thierry (where there are, by the way, several manufactories of wind-instruments) and have luncheon by the riverside in a hotel over whose porch is an enormous hole made by a shell. Close by is an attractive statue of De la Fontaine, of fable fame, which escaped all harm in a town where the street-fighting was particularly fierce, and where nearly every house and tree in the principal streets is pitted and scarred by bullets. Above the town stands a fine old fortress, built by Charles Martel in the eighth century, and besieged and taken by the English in the fifteenth ; so we were not altogether strangers, but possibly more welcome, when, after the lapse of four hundred years, we English arrived the other day before the castle with arms in our hands.

Thence let us go on to Fère en Tardenois. Many of our soldiers are buried here in the churchyard ; it was, I think, head quarters of the British force for some time. I shall never forget this little town, on account of the stormiest and the funniest interview which I had one Sunday morning with a newly arrived Commandant de la Place. I had been, as in duty bound, to call

upon him at his official residence, but he was not at home ; so we proceeded to visit the mayor. Suddenly, from a side street, we heard a voice of thunder roaring (if I may use such a word respectfully of so great a man) at our car. Of course we stopped as soon as possible, but not soon enough ; whereupon we were surrounded by soldiers and, when a large enough crowd had collected, we were addressed as a public meeting by this tiny little man who had such a big hat covered with gold braid that one could hardly see his face, though we knew where the voice came from. At first nothing would pacify him. We showed him passports and ‘*permis de circuler*,’ and all the other documents that we happened to have brought with us, but these only added fuel to the fire. He stormed at us for not having reported to him on our arrival in ‘his’ town—the very thing we had done ; he cross-questioned us both as to why we had stopped and why we wished to proceed, but fortunately he did not give us time for cross answers. Eventually we were able to make him aware of our very innocent mission and he became somewhat quieter but he was far from happy in his mind. If we had not been so hungry, I think we should have departed

at once ; indeed we promised to do so if he, on his part, would show us where we could get some food to take with us. Thereupon his attitude immediately changed ; he and his staff marched solemnly with us to a little restaurant (which had been forcibly ‘closed by order’ the night before), directed it to open its doors and to feed us. Such nice people, the inn-keeper and his wife, and such excellent food ! When the Commandant had left us, there arose a sound of subdued and respectful merriment ; it seems that, until quite recently, there had been a certain number of spies travelling through the town a great deal too easily, and that the disguise of British uniforms in Red Cross cars was not unknown. Our boisterous friend had just been appointed to put things right in Fère ; so when, two days after his arrival, he captured *us*, I suppose he was anxious that everybody should know it ! However, after luncheon, he returned absolutely satisfied, doubtless by telephone from our last halt, as to our *bona fides*, and gave us all the help he could. So all ended happily ; for when I saw the landlady of the restaurant on a subsequent visit (the peppery Commandant had, alas ! been transferred) she told me that the day we lunched

there the order to close her restaurant had been withdrawn.

At Fère en Tardenois we are at the gate of the Aisne country: woods natural and planted, cultivated fields and undulating land, and the farther we travel north or east the more distinct becomes the sound of the guns. I shall always be sorry that my conscience never allowed me (though my 'permis de circuler' did) to go right into Reims. I say my 'conscience,' but I am not sure that it was altogether that which prevented me. In my visits to other parts of the line, both French and English, I had heard such hard things said of those—especially those in high places who ought to have known better—who clamoured and intrigued to spend a week-end here or there on the Front, out of no motive nobler than curiosity, that I determined from the outset to go nowhere in France except on business bent. Frankly, I should not like to be the gentleman (who had as much to do with the fighting as any other neutral) whose influence procured him leave, in his leisure hours, to go along a certain road (where he left his car), and then to climb a hill whence he could get a good view of a certain battle. When he had feasted long enough on this sight he returned to

his car, to find it wrecked and his chauffeur killed by a shell that had burst in the road during his absence. War seems to me to be too cruel and damnable a thing for any one to want to watch it who can honourably be excused from it, too serious a thing to allow its directors to be constantly interrupted by visits from influential tourists. Somehow I cannot imagine the German staff distracted from their work by the untimely arrival of curious people 'who treat us as though we were the Zoo.'

Holding these views I did not go into Reims, for the British Army had never moved so far to the east, and there was nothing for me to do in that direction farther than the little town of Fismes. We were there one bitterly cold night in January under a full moon in a frosty sky. As usual we had to apply to the local authorities for billets and each of us found himself lodged in first-rate quarters. I was entertained by an old farmer and his wife whose property was for the time being in the hands of the enemy; they had sons and grandsons at the War and were full of pride and interest in all that was going on. It was not, however, any part of their duty to feed us; so, in the evening, we found a humble hotel near the railway, where we got all that was necessary to

sustain life. After supper we were walking home through the silent market-place, thinking no evil, when a voice rang out from the steps of the Town Hall : ‘ *Qui va là ?* ’ and we found ourselves within five yards of a sentry whose rifle barrel seemed to be peering at our waist-belts. So unexpected was the challenge that every word of every known language failed me ; I could no more utter the monosyllable ‘ friend ’ in English at that moment than I could have spoken it in Choctaw or in Chinese. My tongue clave to the roof of my mouth, whilst my brain was occupied in creating the pathetic picture of three Englishmen stretched in the snow, victims of the unerring aim of a territorial ally. It seemed minutes before I could find words ; but when, at last, the power of speech returned and I gasped out ‘ *Amis—Anglais,* ’ both we and the sentry were immensely relieved, and the incident ended in laughter. And so to bed, where, for a long time, I lay awake listening to the church bells as they chimed the hours and to the cannon-shots as they burst upon the music of that midnight peace.

The next day we moved quietly along the line of the Aisne in rear of the Army, searching for and finding graves as we went. We were now in the

beating heart of the real thing: aeroplanes were soaring about in the cloudless sky, and the jar of guns was ceaselessly dinning about our ears. At one point our work took us down to within a few hundred yards of the trenches, to a farm where thirty British soldiers were buried; there we had the novel sensation of hearing the famous 'seventy-five' cannon shooting over our heads to the hill-tops that faced us across the river, whilst we could observe on either side of us the astonishing shower of compliments in kind which the enemy returned upon woodland and farm and field. I am not going to pretend for a moment that I liked it: on the contrary, I thought it all exceedingly unpleasant, and it would be idle affectation to suggest that I was anything but glad when we returned to the right side of a sheltering hill and watched the French artillery in action from an observation-point that was comparatively safe. But all day we were searching for graves in rather exposed places and not without success, for we were just in time to see many crosses that could not have stood much longer and to ask our French soldier-friends to put up new ones. In the evening we withdrew a few kilometres to the rear and were most hospitably entertained by the medical

staff of a clearing hospital not far from Soissons, though still within range of the German guns, as our hosts had often found to their cost. But imagine the contrast to the turmoil outside and to the pain upstairs when I found myself listening, after dinner, to the music of a string quartet as perfect as you will ever hear in a concert room ! Four stretcher-bearers had come in with their instruments, and I was anticipating the ordinary kind of camp-concert that one associates with summer evenings after manœuvres in peace-time : I was not in the least prepared for Brahms and Bach and advanced French compositions interpreted by men, now mobilised, who were all gold-medallists of the Conservatoire in Paris and whose names are household words with the concert-going public. That night we were billeted in a deserted house which the owners had left, just as it stood, when the civilian population was moved to the rear. It was quite a curious sensation to find oneself a visitor in a nice house without host or hostess ; to see their letters and household gods scattered about, their scent-bottles from the hair-dresser at Reims, their books from the library at Soissons—places which now can boast of no such peace-time conveniences. But neither the signi-



FRENCH CLEARING HOSPITAL: SUMMER QUARTERS



THE STAFF AND ENGLISH VISITORS

ficance of our lonely quarters, nor the warning that the sound of bursting shells would probably awaken us during the night, nor yet the noisy rumbling of ambulances returning from the Front, prevented us from sleeping sound and late after the adventures of the day.

In May I visited the same staff again in their summer quarters, rather farther behind the line. They had been close up to the Front ever since August, and it was their turn to have something like a rest. I found them delightfully installed in three comfortable houses set in the depths of a large park, with terraces for the invalids to bask upon and ornamental water for the convalescents to fish in. And there again, on a beautiful summer evening, we were fortunate enough to listen to a wonderful concert in the open air by the same artists who had charmed us in the winter. It was a lovely scene: the musicians on a balcony, patients' beds drawn up to every window, fifty or sixty wounded men in hospital uniform lying about on the green lawn, now listening intently, now singing some patriotic chorus, but paying no attention whatever to the rattle of the *mitrailleuses* in the distance, whose sound was far more familiar to them than it was to me.

Another scene remains to be described before I close my notes on this visit to the Aisne. It was the Sunday chosen by His Holiness the Pope to be devoted to prayers for Peace in every church throughout Catholic Christendom; by accident or design, the same day had been selected to celebrate the victories of the 'seventy-five' gun in every county in France. Three courses were thus open to us all: either 'to seek peace and ensue it,' or to buy little papier-mâché medals bearing the effigy of this famous death-dealing cannon, which were on sale in the streets and outside the church-doors, or to buy the medals and then go to Mass. This last, I suspect, was the most popular line of conduct. Mass was at 9.30, in a small but very beautiful church of Norman design, which was already nearly full when we arrived—full, in the sense that Catholic churches are full nowadays, from the chancel steps to the west-end door, transepts and aisles crammed. There were perhaps two thousand soldiers, from the highest to the lowest, in their war-stained uniforms, which seemed to spread a haze of bluish-grey across the nave, a soft cloud of warm colour only broken here and there by the white flecks of head-bandages and arm-slings—

the honourable badges of those who have fallen by the way. What a congregation of practising Catholics ! These men—unkempt, weary, and accoutred—have some of them tramped down to Mass, after their long vigil beside the guns or in the trenches, to say their thanksgiving ; others, on their way up to the first line where they will be under fire by midday, offer perhaps their last Intercession with the Sacrifice before they march.

The organ plays a soft prelude as the Celebrant enters the Sanctuary ; the Introit is chanted by a voluntary but not particularly tuneful choir. . . . I notice the priest tonsured but mustachioed ; he kneels before the altar and, beneath his lace alb, I catch sight of the scarlet breeches and high riding-boots of a cavalry soldier. The Mass proceeds ; intercessory prayers are read from the choir-steps by a venerable Curé, and the sermon is then preached by yet another soldier-priest without vestments of any kind, just wearing his dusty blue uniform with the simple badge of the Red Cross upon his arm. The Canon is reached, and through the atmosphere of devotion, tense and awful, is wafted soft, stringed music, as of angels, broken by the thunder of guns afar. ‘ *In terra Pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.* . . .

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. . . .
Pacem meam do vobis,' from within, answered by the angry roar of artillery from without. And the same thing is going on all down the line from Nieuport to the Vosges, from the Italian-Swiss frontier to the Adriatic: in very concrete form the eternal fight is being delivered between Love and Hate, Good and Evil, Life and Death. . . . Mass is over; the Priest has blessed his congregation and his comrades. As admiring citizens of an allied nation we watch these ragged regiments of a royal people stream out into the sunlight to obey the call of Duty. Then we proceed upon our way to search for the hidden resting-places of our own most noble dead.

CHAPTER X

JOAN OF ARC

A Visit to Orleans—The Anniversary—No Processions ‘as usual’
—French and British Tributes—Passing Reflections—In the
Cathedral—A Wonderful Ceremony—Her Festival at the Front
—Impressive Scenes

To appreciate the change, deep and wide, which this terrible war has wrought in the temperament of the French people as a whole, I followed the advice of an old French friend and paid a visit to Orleans on May 8—the day upon which, for nearly five centuries, that historic city has celebrated the name and fame of Joan of Arc. As a matter of fact, I arrived from Paris on the previous evening, in company with the Mayor of Orleans who has also been M.P. for the city for the past thirty years. From what he told me, and from what I have read in old chronicles, I learned how festive and brilliant these celebrations had been of yore. In old days every house was decorated with flags and flowers; fireworks and military music, processions and popular manifestations of every kind, ushered in Joan of Arc’s day. But, on

this beautiful summer eve of the festival, all these externals were absent ; gay trappings were nowhere to be seen whilst the flower of France was battling in the trenches. People appeared to be going about their ordinary business ; military cripples in large numbers were limping along the streets ; a few enterprising persons were selling little medallions of Jeanne d'Arc, whose many statues seemed to have rather more admirers than usual. And that was all.

The next morning—'the day'—the change was all the more apparent. For long, long years, May 8, when Joan of Arc drove the English out of Orleans, was kept as a feast-day, which united every section of a city that still glories in her name. Grand processions of Church and State once paraded together through the narrow streets—the Bishop and the Mayor in close co-operation ; there used to be a military representation (in ancient costumes) of the passage of Joan of Arc across the Loire to relieve the town. But in this year of grace neither of these parades was possible. The Law of Separation utterly prevented a joint procession of clerical and civil authority—more's the pity!—and the poignant circumstances of the War made any theatrical show unthinkable.

Do not say to yourself, 'How unfortunate for you to have selected such an unlucky year!' Not at all; it was worth anything to see, naked and unashamed, the Soul of a people in mourning, paying homage of the purest kind to her whom one may almost call their Patron Saint, without the meretricious aid of superfluous entertainment. Joan of Arc is the heart of this beautiful land: five hundred years ago she delivered it at the eleventh hour; to-day, in the hour of trial and danger, the population turns to her again. The law of the State against the Church has had its way; the net result here, as elsewhere in France, is an attitude towards the supernatural, not only of gratitude but of hope. That, surely, is the explanation of the overflowing congregations that I have seen month after month in the cathedrals of Paris and Rouen and Beauvais and Abbeville and Amiens and Meaux, in churches which once were almost deserted; that is why the Low Mass in the cathedral at Orleans this morning was said in the presence of several hundred people. Their Jeanne is with them still; hers was the name that won the day in 1429; the name which was the Army password throughout the French lines on September 3, 1914, when the German advance

upon Paris was checked for reasons which are as yet unexplained.

Feeling as I do about Joan of Arc, I was delighted when the Mayor asked me to accompany him and the civil and military dignitaries of the Department on their annual visit to the great statue of the 'Virgin Deliverer' in the principal square, and then to the cemetery to pay homage to the fallen soldiers of France who lie there. Once more he explained that there would be no military bands, no orations, no 'pomp and circumstance' this year. All the more willingly, I accepted, and at 10 A.M. we left the Mairie, perhaps only fifty strong, preceded by those who were deputed to carry our memorial wreaths. At the principal statue, in the centre of the Place du Martroi, an immense crowd had assembled—drawn thither, not by mimes or music, but by the impulse of rare devotion. There we deposited our wreaths, and I was invited by the Mayor to say a few words to the multitude in French. It was a baffling request, but impossible to refuse; so I spoke for a minute or two about 'the incomparable daughter of France who long ago pointed out the path of Patriotism down which the children of France are now marching through suffering to Victory.'



STATUE OF JOAN OF ARC, PLACE DU MARTROI, ORLEANS



THE CATHEDRAL, ORLEANS

The Mayor replied in an admirable little speech, and then we all proceeded on foot for a mile or so to the cemetery, where we found another great concourse of people, all in black, awaiting us; there too, a forest of small wooden crosses erected to the victims of the War—French, British, Moroccans, Indians, and others. Once more I had to speak, and the Mayor acknowledged my tribute of respect in appropriate language. After this we left the central monument, and the crowd surged round it; everyone seemed to have brought a sprig of lilac, a bunch of spring flowers or a palm-leaf, and these they laid in masses beside our own. It was a wonderfully touching ceremony, which I would not have missed for anything.

The afternoon I spent in sight-seeing and reflection, in a city that is radiant with chestnut and hawthorn and lilac in full bloom.

Two things strike me as particularly curious: in the Joan of Arc Museum there must be hundreds of portraits of 'La Pucelle,' whether in bronze or clay, oil or crayon, china or wax; there is no resemblance whatever between any two of them, nor is there in the whole of that collection anything that pretends to be authentic of her features or her handwriting or her property. I am told there

is nothing of the kind in France—or elsewhere. Secondly, I cannot find any contemporary record of enthusiasm or even gratitude (if one excepts a few prayers for her deliverance from prison) for Joan of Arc, whilst she was engaged in recovering the national liberty of France, save only among the devoted soldiers whom she led. Every difficulty was placed in the path of her campaign by the Court of the King whom she had come from the Vosges to succour; she was betrayed by those of her own household to the enemy at Compiègne, not a French soul seems to have witnessed in her favour at the trial, and for years after her death it was an indiscretion, if not an offence, even to mention her name in official documents. For a contemporary appreciation of her character we must have recourse to the words of one of her executioners at Rouen: ‘We have burnt a Saint.’ The French—they do not deny it—cared so little about her during her life-time that, but for the awakening of a later and a better conscience, they would now know as little of her prowess for France as they know about the features of her face. How strange, how inexplicable it all seems! Yet the greater glory to her memory. Though never limned in life, she has now a thousand ‘likenesses’;

though discredited by the chronicles of her day, she has now her literary champions in every language; though deprived, by a law of the twentieth century, of the honour of dignifying a festival in which, till recently, Church and State participated, she is still the central figure of public veneration, differing in intention, for the valour of her acts and the immortality of her spirit.

I have said that, in so far as Joan the General is concerned, the popular festival was curtailed by the Civil Authority, in obedience to the very natural instincts of propriety in these days of family bereavement and national anxiety. But in respect of Joan the Mystic, the supernatural conqueress, the Beatified, the Church sees no reason to diminish in any degree the commemoration of the Virgin Deliverer of Orleans. So, on Sunday, May 9, I found Orleans Cathedral decked and draped in crimson and gold hangings, its altars ablaze, and every inch of its available space packed with a dense crowd from baptistery to apse. (I could not help thinking of the great ceremony of the Beatification of Joan of Arc which I had witnessed at St. Peter's in Rome in 1909, when Monseigneur Touchet, the present Bishop of Orleans, had presided over the Commission of

Examination which ultimately entitled Joan to enter the lists of the Beatified.) The High Mass began with a magnificent procession: a white-veiled sisterhood bearing the standard of 'La Pucelle,' choristers innumerable, abbés, clergy and cathedral staff, soldier-priests from the Front in uniform; then the Bishop of Orleans in full canonicals, followed by the Bishop of Montauban similarly attired, and lastly the Archbishop of Tours, a saintly figure in cloth-of-gold, blessing the congregation as he passed. All the while a grand processional hymn was being sung by everybody in the cathedral, led by a choir of three hundred voices and accompanied by organ and full orchestra: it was called 'Hymne à l'Étendard de Jeanne d'Arc,' and was conducted by Abbé Laurent, the composer. At the end of the procession the sanctuary seemed to be one blaze of gold, and the Mass began. After the Gospel there was another procession down to the pulpit in the middle of the nave, where the Archbishop and the rest took their places to listen to the 'panegyric' as it is called. This was delivered in earnest and eloquent terms by the Bishop of Montauban (Mgr. Marty), the beauty of whose language and dramatic gesture made an hour seem

like ten minutes, and held the whole cathedral in one long tense embrace of silence. The Mass was then continued and concluded, about two and a half hours after the service had begun. Then I was taken by the Bishop to luncheon at his palace, where I had the honour of meeting the great divines who had come to the festival, and whose combined knowledge of the history and times of Joan of Arc, to say nothing of their brilliant conversation about her, could not have been surpassed in the whole of France.

With a few friends, some of whom were leaving immediately for the Front, I passed the evening wandering in the woods of a delightful chateau on the Loire and returned to Orleans under a star-lit sky, to ponder over the phenomenal change that five hundred years have wrought in the relations between France and England and to smile, after all that I had seen that day, at the announcement in the evening papers: 'The Bishop of Metz has given orders to his clergy to remove from their churches all statues of the Blessed Joan of Arc.'

HER FEAST DAY AT THE FRONT

I spent her festival proper, May 16, very far indeed from cathedrals and Archbishops and

processions. Only a week after I had left Orleans, and all I have described above, I was once more out at the Front, where the French guns were firing with the regularity that connotes illimitable ammunition, and German shells were falling 'like leaves in Vallombrosa.' I went to Low Mass in a little village church, built in the thirteenth century: tumble-down, dirty, picturesque, but full of the right sort of people. I arrived a good half-hour too soon: there was time, therefore, to see a fine fight between a French aeroplane and some German guns: the former represented to the naked eye by a speck in the sky and the latter by vivid little flashes, immediately followed by white feathery cloud-balls in the heavens, betokening the bursting of one shell after the other. And so to Mass, down an avenue of horses in reserve, followed by the priest—a cavalry soldier, who had ridden over for the service.

Later in the morning I paid a visit to a ruined Abbey, built on the heights of a rock that commands the enemy lines, and from which we could see one important German observation-post. I hasten to add that there were no French guns anywhere near this ancient and sacred building. As we approached the church, up a rugged pathway

hewn out of the solid rock, we heard a very 'cheerful noise' surging out on to the summer air. It was High Mass for the soldiers, and they were singing a plain-song Gradual with all their might. We looked in and found the remains of the ancient church simply but splendidly decorated with hangings and banners and flowers in honour of Joan of Arc, and the whole floor space crowded with soldiers. Across the field of powdered-blue uniforms, I saw in the distance the parish priest at the altar, attended by an old man of about eighty years of age, who 'served' in his work-a-day attire. It was altogether an inspiring sight and significant of the true spirit in which the French are fighting this war.

CHAPTER XI

INTER ARMA CARITAS

A 'Neutral' Atmosphere—Geneva—Censorship of the Press—The International Committee of the Red Cross—Its Works, Responsibilities, and Success—The Refugees' Help Society—On the French Frontier—Experiences of the Exiles—German Switzerland—Berne—Charity for All

WHAT contrast could be greater, after ten months spent largely within hearing of the guns, than to wake up one fine morning in July in the serene atmosphere of a neutral country? Yet it so occurred to me, for my work suddenly called me into Switzerland, and I left Paris with its anxieties and sorrows, its wounded and its young reserves, to find myself twelve hours later beside the placid waters of the Lake of Geneva. Here there is no sadness in the streets, no shops are closed—not even German ones; there are no uniforms, except those of the hotel porters, no picture post-cards depicting scenes of war and misery. All is just as bright as it was twelve months ago: there are bands playing in the restaurants, parties making excursions in the steamers, little white-winged

cutters flitting to and fro upon the deep blue lake. I find myself wondering whether the same world can contain within so small a circle two atmospheres so greatly differing; whether the same mind can possibly grasp almost simultaneously two such conflicting impressions of pleasure and pain. The whole world was at war, so it seemed to me only last night; to-day, I realise that in the very centre of it there is actually—Peace. . . . The sun is setting; boys are bathing in the lake, men set free from business are solemnly fishing in rows from the bridges, a noisy aeroplane is flying *for advertisement* over the roofs of the houses—I have not seen such innocent aeronautics for months. . . . It is night, and I have dined at a restaurant in this neutral city, hearing French Italian, and German spoken at the tables near me; there are no lights hidden here; the bay is outlined with a gleaming necklace of lamps, the Kursaal is brilliantly illuminated with electricity, and the lightning flashes over Mont Blanc in the distance are less terrifying by far than the flame of the shells that broke over Hill 60.

So far so neutral. The foregoing may stand for a passable portrait of the face of this neutral country, but it is no proper description of either

its head or its heart. We must all try to believe that these are neutral too, but it is very difficult. The head understands very clearly that the independence of Switzerland is bound up with its neutrality, and the Federal Government, therefore, is correctitude itself. Nevertheless, so far as I can gather, this august body is getting into trouble just now over the Censorship of the Press—like other august bodies ; and men are beginning to say, ‘ Neutrality is all very well, but what about Liberty ? Surely we can be neutrals without being cowards.’ And they appeal to the ever-blessed memory of William Tell for liberty to follow and express the dictates of their consciences rather than to bow the knee to a new Press-Gessler for liberty ‘ to exhibit our sympathy for heroic little Belgium and to do our duty in condemning her executioner.’ This, I feel pretty certain, is the unanimous view of Latin Switzerland ; but the Government, whose seat is at Berne, has to consider Teutonic Switzerland as well, and its path is not an easy one.

As for the heart of the country, it is indeed neutral, if by that we mean charitable and immensely kind to all belligerents alike. It is well symbolised by the National Flag—a cross of pure white

in the centre of a blood-red field. To Switzerland the non-official world has learned to look for news of prisoners of war and for getting money and comforts to them; for forwarding letters from families to their sons wounded, as well as to civilians interned, in enemy countries; for effecting the exchange of prisoners, the visitation of prisoner-camps, and for numerous other offices of Christian benevolence in time of war. '*Inter arma caritas*' is the motto of the International Committee of the Red Cross Society which sits at Geneva; international, in the sense that it operates as a clearing-house *between* nations, *not* that it is composed of representatives of all nations, since each of its members must be a Swiss resident in Geneva. It is the strangest and one of the most successful of bodies. Apparently it has no constitution and it elects itself; yet it is accepted by Red Cross Societies throughout the world as the Governing Body of the whole organisation, no part of which alters its constitution or radically changes its functions before consultation with, and the consent of, the International Committee. At this moment the duties of this important body extend far beyond the ordinary boundaries of a central committee.

It has gathered round it, at the Musée Rath, an organisation of twelve hundred workers, nearly all voluntary, who labour day and night in the various sections that go to make up the 'Agence des Prisonniers de Guerre.' They forward letters and parcels; answer enquiries from, and make investigations for, natives of all countries who are at war: their labour, like their love, for all men appears to be never-ending. I was greatly impressed with the business-like methods of this organisation, over which I was conducted by M. Edouard Naville, the celebrated Egyptologist, who is Vice-President of the International Committee. The card-index system is the basis of operations: every single man, whose name reaches the Agency as a prisoner of war (whether military or civil), or as missing, or as killed, has a card to himself, upon which is written all that is known about him and the gist of communications to and from his family. To give some idea of the extent of the work transacted, the following figures may suffice. Between October 15, 1914, and January 31, 1915, the Agency received 26,473 visitors, 17,000 telegrams, 990,000 letters—many of them making enquiries concerning 50 to 100 names. During the same period they forwarded

438,000 letters and 1,554,500 printed communications; wrote out 1,040,000 name-cards, corresponded with 104,500 families, and transmitted £40,000 to the inmates of camps in belligerent countries.¹ '*Inter arma caritas*' is an appropriate motto for so wonderful an agency as this.

But the beneficent work that is conceived and executed by neutral heads, hearts, and hands in Switzerland does not end with the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross Society. Here, for instance, in the Rue de Berne, is another wonderfully human institution, the Bureau des Rapatriés Civils, which since the beginning of the War has attended to the wants of exchanged civilian prisoners and of refugees as they pass through Switzerland to their native land. Of exchanged civilians they have nearly 20,000 names of all nationalities that have passed through their hands, and no less than 65,000 poor refugees from French territory occupied by the enemy are also on their lists. This institution has aroused, as indeed it should, the utmost sympathy

¹ The last statistics show that between October 15, 1914, and June 30, 1915, this agency corresponded with 234,731 families; received 1,800,000 letters, and 50,000 visitors; forwarded about 71,300 letters and 11,500 telegrams to various destinations.

and support from all classes, not only in Geneva but all over Switzerland. Its head quarters are in a huge gymnasium as large as a good-sized church. . . .

The refugees have just arrived by train from some central place in Germany at which they have been collected—some from St. Quentin and Cambrai and Lille and some from the neighbourhood of Verdun and the Vosges. They are the poorest of the poor and of all ages; the very old and infirm are taken in ambulances from the train, the healthy walk, and the babies, of whom there are very many, I saw carried by Swiss soldiers in uniform. It is impossible to describe the state of filth, destitution, and utter misery in which nine-tenths of these human castaways reach the hall. Assembled there in the early morning, they are seated on benches and are given a meal served by scores of willing hands; then, one by one, they are taken to a table and registered. After this they have to scan a huge board upon which are written the names of hundreds of missing people about whom information is sought. Often the pilgrim catches sight of his own name, which is then scratched off and news of him is sent at once to the enquirer.



FRENCH REFUGEES LEAVING GENEVA STATION



OUTSIDE THE BUREAU DES REPATRIÉS CIVILS, GENEVA

His next visit is to a sort of lost-letter office, where sometimes you see a sad face break into a smile when eyes catch sight of a letter addressed in a hand-writing which they never expected to see again ; but some eyes are still dim. After these preliminaries there is an inspection of clothing, and few are the cases in which it does not have to be renewed. The organisation is prepared for this and has fitted out close on a thousand bodies a day for over two months. Downstairs, the building is splendidly arranged with bath-rooms and changing-rooms—for Swiss athletes in times of peace. In one room are three large tanks, about thirty feet long by six feet broad, filled with warm water and capable of holding ten men at a time. They strip themselves naked, the first time for months they say, and after a glorious bath they return to a dressing-room where they find a completely new suit of clothes to take the place of their old rags, which are put straight into a furnace and burnt. The women and children are similarly looked after, and the babies are taken off into a special bath-room where a number of little tubs are ranged in a row ; there the infants are scrubbed down and dressed up until—this is literally true in many

cases—their own mothers do not know them. Thus the convoy is disposed of in three or four hours with the utmost quiet and precision, after which they are sent off in tramcars to the French frontier at Annemasse and are once more on the dear soil of their native land. There they are received by a French official organisation, which has a list of the various destinations to which the refugees (if they have no relations ready to receive them) are to be sent; many of them depart almost at once in trains that wait in readiness, and other are billeted in the village until they can be disposed of.

The whole of this complicated machinery works like clock-work under an exceedingly able organiser. I was taken to see the various rooms set aside for an outfitting department; they would have done credit to any large shop in London, so well-stocked and tidily arranged were they. I was shown the boot-room, to which about fifty boys and girls from the Geneva primary schools go twice a week to clean the boots that are kept in store, giving up part of their holiday time to perform this useful and kindly little task. They tell me that the Geneva children take the utmost interest in the refugees; they sew and knit for

tnem, and often go without their midday meals, which they bring to the Bureau and offer to some poor little waif who may need food more than they.

One afternoon I went out to Annemasse and talked with some of the refugees who were lodged in the 'Maison Familiale.' The Directress of this establishment was a charming young lady who had escaped, after many adventures, from her invaded home. She had undergone severe bombardment and, after her village was taken, she and others were employed by the gentle Huns to collect and bury the dead; her escape three months later was a thrilling story of peril overcome by courage. One poor old woman was there from S——. She had been mercilessly treated, robbed and imprisoned with her husband, who was eighty years old and who died in hospital soon after reaching Geneva. Nothing could console her for the loss of her little home; it was all she had or cared for. Her sons were kept in France by the Germans and made to work for them, her grandsons were in the French Army, and she knew not whether they were alive or dead; tears poured down her dear weather-beaten old face as she told the story of her exodus. Then I talked to a boy from

M——; he had been in a German hospital with heart-disease and was now utterly homeless and destitute. The things he had seen in those early days of the War were enough to make one's blood run cold as he told them. He spoke of a boy friend whom the German soldiers were 'chaffing' in their heavy-tongued way :

'You are French, are you not?' they asked him, and he answered 'Yes.'

'Then why don't you show your colours? Are you afraid?'

The boy, nettled at this charge of cowardice and lack of patriotism, opened his coat and showed a little tricolour rosette pinned on his waistcoat over his heart.

'That's right,' they scoffed. 'Now say "Vive la France!"'

'Vive la France!' he shouted; *and they shot him dead.*

A woman looking out of a window saw this murder and cried out, 'Fainéants, assassins!'; *she was shot dead at her window.*

There were others who could tell of the murder of English wounded at La Bassée under circumstances of incredible cruelty; God grant that these murderers may soon be brought to justice.

Ordonnance

I Il est strictement défendu d'emporter d'autres papiers que des légitimations personnelles.

Des lettres étrangers et de l'argent ne sont pas permis.

Les personnes seront visitées exactement, aussi aux choses cousues.

Chaque personne, qui est trouvée avec des choses défendues sera fusillée.

II Bagages

- 1) On ne peut pas transporter plus de 35 Kgs de bagage
- 2) . Il faut designer les bagages exactement comme suit:

a) .X. Nr. -

b) Nom de famille prénom, l'adresse exacte, la rue et le numéro de la maison qu'il habite actuellement. -

Le Commandant.

FACSIMILE (REDUCED) OF REGULATIONS ISSUED BY GERMAN COMMANDANT TO
FRENCH REFUGEES LEAVING OCCUPIED TERRITORY IN FRANCE

Notice especially the penalty announced at the end of Section I.

1914
The German Government has repeatedly asked the French Government to furnish, through the agency of neutral countries, the supplies necessary for the districts situated in the region occupied by the German troops. The French Government having given a formal refusal to all these requests, the German Government finds itself unwillingly compelled to send back into France a part of this population: in the first place those who are not in a position to continue their own occupations. For many of these unhappy people who will be thus compelled to leave their home, this step is very hard, but entire responsibility falls upon a Government which was unwilling to take care of its own subjects.

NOTICE

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Paris.

Il est strictement interdit de
porter des lettres, des cartes ou
autres documents quelconques, par
surtout à destination ou provenance d'un point
dans la France non occupée par
les Allemands.

Aucune personne n'aura le
droit de passer la frontière
sans se soumettre à une in-
spection rigoureuse.

Toutes les personnes, sans se
rendre compte, seront renvoyées
en Allemagne et y seront confinées
comme prisonniers.

WARNING

It is strictly forbidden to carry letters, postcards, &c., however unimportant the contents, from occupied territory to persons residing in that part of France not occupied by the Germans.

No one will be allowed to pass the frontier without rigorous 'inspection.'

All guilty persons will be deported to Germany and there confined as prisoners.

L'Ordre du Commandant.

1. Tous les habitants seront transportés cette nuit par chemin de fer.
2. Les habitants qui ne sont pas transportables seront placés dans l'hôpital.
Il faut que ces personnes y arrivent ce soir à sept heures (heure allemande).
3. Tous les autres doivent sortir des maisons à huit heures (heure allemande) ce soir pour se réunir à la fabrique de toile de Monsieur Craspeil près de la gare. Jusqu'à ce temps il est défendu de se promener dans les rues.
4. Ceux qui n'obéissent pas à ces ordres seront arrêtés et traités comme espions.

La Bassée 3 Avril 1915

Le Commandant

FACSIMILE (REDUCED) OF REGULATIONS ISSUED
BY THE COMMANDANT TO REFUGEES FROM
LA BASSÉE

Notice the last paragraph.

It is no doubt the recitation of such incidents, and hundreds like them, by men and women who have suffered, and who feel their consciences and hearts relieved when they can unbosom themselves, out of earshot and gunshot of their gaolers, that has caused so great a change in the attitude of German Switzerland towards the true authors of this war. It was fear lest such narratives should reach too many neutral homes that prompted the German Government to suggest that French refugees from Germany should travel in non-stop trains through Switzerland into France—a suggestion that savoured too much of dictation for it to be adopted.

As at Geneva, so in Berne, the seat of the Federal Government and the head quarters of the Army, which I observe is clad in uniforms of the latest German pattern. There, although the Swiss are partially mobilised on their frontiers, and have therefore the first claim on their compatriots, I saw endless evidence of a national neutrality that is benevolent to all belligerents. There is a committee of Berne ladies supplying prisoners in French, German, and British camps with comforts of various kinds; there is a French section which sends bread (baked in enormous

quantities in Switzerland) and clothing to French prisoners in Germany and which has appointed neutral delegates to superintend the distribution of all these gifts when they reach the various camps; a Russian section, well supplied with money to buy comforts and necessities of life wholesale for the thousands of captive Russians whose families are too far off to send them separate parcels; and a British section, which dispatches vast consignments of loaves and other articles to our own prisoners. All these, and the Red Cross Society in Switzerland, are working with a will and a perseverance beyond praise, glad no doubt that they are free from the burden and sorrow of war, yet anxious to pay for their immunity by doing all that in them lies to help and relieve belligerents abroad and their families at home in every way that the ingenuity of kind hearts can suggest. '*Inter arma caritas*,' the Red Cross motto, is certainly the guiding principle of Swiss life to-day: generous and indiscriminately kind to the helpless and fallen victims of the German War.

CHAPTER XII

A RAILWAY JOURNEY

The 'Grands Blessés'—Return from Exile—Happy Warriors—
Inventive Newspapers—Demonstrations of Welcome—Home
at Last

BEHOLD a train so important that hundreds of human beings at either end of its journey hunger for its appearance ; carrying freight so precious that the authorities took months to decide whether it should or should not proceed : a train so full of pathos and hope that the thousands who watched it pass knew not whether to cheer or to cry. I suppose we have all, at some time or another, gone down to the London docks, or to one of our great provincial ports, to welcome the traveller home, and have fretted until the ship was signalled ; or ourselves, when many days' journey from England, have cursed the delays and counted the hours that separated us from the greeting which we knew was waiting for us on the platform or on the quay. But how weak and almost unworthy seem these emotions compared

to that which burns in the soul of the man who has been caged in a prison camp or hospital in Germany for nearly a year and who suddenly learns that, crippled for life though he be, he has been chosen as one among thousands to be exchanged and to be sent home !

Since the beginning of April several thousands of these broken soldiers of war have been cooped up at Constance, on the confines of Germany, gazing with longing eyes at free and peaceful Switzerland, beyond which lies '*La Patrie*'; they await the close of long-drawn negotiations upon which all self-respecting Foreign Offices pride themselves, the findings of numerous medical and military boards which will settle whether they are ill or incapable enough to be exchanged, the final sentence to go home or return back to hospital on enemy soil, with a heart-eating anxiety that baffles all description.

At last the schedules, defining what constitutes an 'incurable,' are satisfactorily composed ; a selection of 280 invalids is made from 3000 possibles, and they forthwith march, hobble, or crawl to the railway station, the happiest warriors on earth. The train is just comfortably filled ; besides the *mutilés* there are a few medical officers who, if

conventions had any sanctity in German eyes nowadays, ought never to have been interned, and a dozen Red Cross nurses and orderlies of Swiss nationality to take care of the helpless on the journey. A curious but not unsympathetic crowd watches the departure of the train; being still in Germany there is no demonstration. But, at the Swiss frontier, a soldier presents arms, and quite a respectable gathering of people cry '*Vive la France!*' and throw flowers to the wounded—this in 'German' Switzerland!

The journey continues to Zurich which is reached just before 10 P.M. There an immense crowd has assembled at the station to cheer the travellers with kindly words and presents; but the shadow of the blessed word 'neutrality,' rather than its substance, has darkened the counsels of the local authority who forbid the public to approach the platform. Fortunately, through the kindness of the Swiss military authorities, I am provided with a ticket to travel by this train back to Geneva, and so, in company with the French Ambassador, M. Beau, and two ladies, the gates are opened to us and we join the convoy. The train consists of sixteen corridor-carriages, including one or two dining-saloons which have

been suitably arranged for lying-down cases, carrying back to France the bravest and merriest collection of incurables that it has ever been my lot to see. We four visitors scatter through the train, each of us laden with trifling comforts for our comrades. I felt very proud of being the first Englishman who had hitherto been allowed to make this journey, of the opportunity to learn at first-hand something of the life that our wounded Allies had been living in Germany and to realise, even more fully than at the seat of war itself, the indomitable qualities of endurance and pluck which lie deep at the roots of a temperament that we have always called mercurial.

I plunged straight into a car-load of French soldiers with radiant faces, though they had only half the proper complement of legs and arms between them. Introducing myself as an ally in civilian clothes (for we were not allowed to wear khaki in Switzerland) they literally fell upon me with questions of every sort and kind.

‘Tell us what is really happening in the War.’

‘In the Argonne, where I was wounded?’ says one.

‘Near Ypres: we still hold Ypres, I hope?’ says another.

‘What about the siege of Khartoum?’ asks a third.

‘Tell us about the massacre in the Dardanelles,’ demands a fourth.

Gradually we got settled down to a regular kind of catechism, and I told them what wonderful things their countrymen were doing in Flanders and the Argonne and the Vosges, thanks to their splendid courage and the miracles wrought by the ‘seventy-five’ gun.

‘Miracle, you call it?’ said one man with a laugh. ‘This isn’t much of a miracle!’ and he pointed to the empty flap of a trouser leg, a foot in a splint, and a shattered wrist.

‘That is what our “seventy-five” gave me when I was lying out in the open and the Boches made a counter-attack.’

I was able also to dispel the illusions about the siege of Khartoum and a massacre of all French and British troops by the Turks which resulted in a complete retirement from the Dardanelles! These, and a large variety of similar stories, were the main contents of a bi-weekly newspaper published by the Germans at Charleville for the ‘benefit’ of French prisoners. They told me that they always bought it, though

money was scarce and it cost a penny, because there was always so much to laugh at in it ; certainly, if all the issues of *La Gazette des Ardennes* were as unconsciously comic as those which I saw on that train, the penny was money well spent. Several men told me that, on the days when this egregious newspaper appeared with its imaginary news of French defeats and of disasters to the Allies all over the globe, German officers and N.C.O.'s used to go round the camps and ask the men what they thought of it. The Germans, who unfortunately believed it all, were horrified to see their captives making exceedingly merry and declining to credit a single word. Another paper of the same agreeable kind is circulated for the benefit of English prisoners and is called *The Continental Times—a Journal for Americans in Europe*, price twopence halfpenny—and dear at the price. I can hardly imagine any sane American buying it, as it contains little but reprints of ravings against England (if possible by English writers), off-scouring from newspapers like the Gaelic-American and clumsy inventions by way of war news. It is fair to add that it now publishes some of the French and English *communiqués* from the seat of war ; but it did not include these

items until it had done its best in all previous numbers to prove that such information from the Allies was unworthy of credence.

In another compartment were a number of men who had fought beside our British troops and even now, after ten months' absence from the field, were full of praise for their shooting and calm courage in those 'tight places' that preceded the turning victory on the Marne. Some, too, had been in hospital at Maubeuge and elsewhere with '*Tommee*,' as they affectionately called all their English friends, and told story after story of how, with mouth-organs or card-tricks or incomprehensible songs, the British soldier kept them all alive when they were down on their luck. It was good hearing that, in hospital, they were all pretty well treated and fed, though medical attendance was short. It was not until they got drafted into camps that the food and barrack accommodation became unbearably bad and the gloom of imprisonment wore them down and broke their spirit. But even so, every one of these Frenchmen told me that still worse treatment and fouler food was the lot of the English and Russian prisoners, for whom the cultured Hun reserves the bitterest of his hate. This was very

marked in some of the camps, where those Frenchmen who could ever hope to fight again used to be called out on parade and exhorted to say that they would now join the German forces

Verkaufsstelle	Stadt	75 gr Brot
Nr.	Heidel-	oder
	berg	50 gr Mehl
Gültig für die Zeit vom 3. Mai bis einschließlich 30. Mai.		
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Nr.	Heidel-	oder
	berg	50 gr Mehl
Gültig für die Zeit vom 3. Mai bis einschließlich 30. Mai.		
Verkaufsstelle	Stadt	75 gr Brot
Nr.	Heidel-	oder
	berg	50 gr Mehl
Gültig für die Zeit vom 3. Mai bis einschließlich 30. Mai.		

FACSIMILE OF THREE BREAD TICKETS ISSUED TO HOUSEHOLDERS AT
HEIDELBERG.

and fight against the 'treacherous English and the barbarian Russians,' just as the captive Senegalese were offered every kind of bribe if they would take service in Turkey and make an example of the Indian troops! Needless to

say that all these flattering proposals fell on deaf ears.

I passed through several carriages occupied by the graver cases, whose drawn faces told, without questions asked, the story of their long suffering in captivity. In adjoining beds lay two men, both wounded in the same trench in Belgium. They had both seen the same terrible scene: a long line of their own wounded and a German sauntering down that line and administering the *coup de grâce* from a revolver to each helpless man as he passed. One of these invalids had three bullets in the lungs from this executioner, but did not succumb; one bullet still remained to be extracted. The other poor fellow said that he had only escaped the fate of his unhappy comrades by smearing the blood, that flowed from a wound in one arm, over his face and feigning to be dead. This savage practice of 'finishing-off' wounded men did not lack plenty of confirmation as one talked with those unfortunate men; I hope that, now they are safe home again, their depositions will have been taken before a competent authority against the great day of reckoning.

The main excitements on this memorable journey were the crowds at the few stations where

the train was scheduled to stop. I have said that at Zurich no one was allowed on the platform ; the same rule applied in the beginning at Berne and Geneva. But, when we reached Olten, there were quite two thousand people thronging the station, bearing flowers and every imaginable gift. Cheers rang through the night air : ‘ *Vive la France !* ’ from the platform, ‘ *Vive la Suisse !* ’ from the train ; every invalid who could do so was hanging out of the window, shaking hands with ten new friends a minute and accepting cigarettes and chocolate and postcards which were pressed upon him from all quarters. At Fribourg the crowd was at least 10,000 strong, and its enthusiasm knew no bounds ; here bouquets were flung by dozens into all the carriages, flags were presented and banners waved, national airs were sung by a town choir and taken up by the assembled multitude, whose manifestations of joy did credit to them at 2 A.M. An hour later we reached Lausanne, thinking not unnaturally that demonstrations were over for the night, but this was far from being the case. Long before we steamed into the station a roar of welcome reached our ears, all the houses along the railway were brilliantly lighted and people in ‘ slumber-wear ’ of

every kind waved frantically from every window. I am pretty well accustomed by this time to seeing outbursts of enthusiasm and public demonstrations involving large crowds in many countries, but I candidly admit that the sight on Lausanne station at 3 A.M. was the finest of its kind that I have ever seen, and it absolutely took my breath away. I calculated that there must have been twenty thousand people there, standing in orderly rows, perhaps ten deep, from the back of the platform to the front, where they pressed against the carriage windows. Every available inch of space, benches and railings and lamp-posts, barrows and trucks and engines—all were requisitioned to get a view of the *glorieux blessés*. A sea of smiling faces, a garden of fresh-picked flowers, a forest of upstretched hands, a volume of full-throated cheering : were soldiers ever made so welcome, even in their own Motherland ? This wonderful reception stirred these splendid exiles to the depths of their souls ; there were glad tears in all their eyes, and it overcame some of the older men completely. But they soon pulled themselves together, and I heard a number of graceful little speeches of thanks being made from the various carriage windows ; I saw overcoats hauled down from the racks and

clasp-knives busily hacking off regimental buttons, which were distributed to the throng outside; there was only one discontented face—that of the conductor of the convoy, and the Frenchmen assured me that he was a German! At last the train steamed out and we returned to our carriage, dazed with the sound and the brilliancy of the scene.

The compartment in which I had been given a seat belonged to the principal French medical officer and to two of his colleagues, but there was no sitting room in it now. It was piled high with bouquets and banners and boxes and sacks full of presents, literally from the floor to the netting 'for light luggage only.'

'I think we should arrange all these presents,' said the P.M.O., 'and offer them to the Colonel, our senior officer, if he is awake.' No sooner said than done; it was discovered that Colonel d'Harcourt, a gallant old soldier of seventy, was not asleep, so a procession was formed, and all the principal gifts were taken to him for distribution among the men when they came to their journey's end. I wish I could have seen that touching arrival at Bellegarde station when, after ten months of martyrdom, these heroes were welcomed home



GERMAN PRISONERS (MEDICAL) PASSING THROUGH GENEVA

by the Secretary for War. But I had to leave them at Geneva, as the dawn came up over the lake ; they had bidden farewell to a long night of misery, and one could read in every face the eagerness which waited for the ‘joy that cometh in the morning.’

CHAPTER XIII

IN ITALY

Milan—Ready—A Socialist Meeting—Off to the Front—War
Fever—Red Cross Work—Refugees—The Battle-spirit

MY modest album of war pictures would indeed be incomplete if I did not attempt a sketch of a visit which I paid recently to the Red Cross Society in Milan. Once more I was transported, within the space of eight short hours, from the hospitality of a neutral nation to the protection of a gallant ally through whose blood the war-fever is coursing fast. Rumour, the lying jade, had whispered to me that, whatever the newspapers might write to the contrary, I should find in Italy a nation half-hearted for the War and less than half-prepared. On this occasion she lied less cleverly than usual; for the shortest of visits to that country is sufficient to persuade one that, whilst the people are whole-hearted for the cause which they are defending, the military and civil authorities need not fear comparison with any of their Allies regarding the efficiency of their preparations at the outbreak of hostilities.

I had two opportunities of judging the martial spirit of the nation by the attitude of the people of Milan. On the morning after my arrival it was announced in the newspapers that, on the same evening, M. Vanderwelde—the Belgian Socialist Minister—would address a mass-meeting in one of the principal theatres of the city and would plead the cause of his native land. The political colour of Milan at present is Socialist, the Mayor and the majority of the Municipal Council are Socialists. It seemed to me that such a meeting would be a fair test, though a high one, of the spirit of the country; for if the Socialists (who have, rightly or wrongly, the reputation of being the peace-party in all countries) supported a war-meeting with enthusiasm, I might reasonably conclude that with other classes the War was probably popular. And so it was; the hall was packed with a most demonstrative public, whose patience did not become exhausted even though the proceedings began more than half an hour late. There were the usual manifestations to while away the time of waiting: cries of ‘*Viva la Guerra!*’ and ‘*Vive la Belgique!*’ followed by tumultuous cheering, until at last the ‘platform’ began to assemble and the Mayor opened the

proceedings. He was vociferously received, and his observations were short and to the point. Next followed the well-known Belgian M.P., M. Lorand, who spoke in beautiful Italian and appealed wonderfully to the intellect of a very appreciative audience. Then an impassioned speech in French from his colleague, M. d'Estrée, who moved the people almost to tears, and finally M. Vanderwelde himself. Of course he had a splendid reception, but, from the very outset, he appeared to misapprehend completely the character of the gathering. As it seemed to me, he imagined that he was addressing a meeting composed entirely of Socialists, instead of Allies, and he treated his subject almost entirely from the Socialist point of view. He judged it necessary to make elaborate excuses for Socialists supporting the War at all, and to develop a long argument in justification of his present attitude as President of the International Committee of Socialists—a kind of ‘*apologia pro vitâ suâ*.’ But this was not what a large number of his hearers, who were interested in the cause of Belgium, had come to listen to ; they were breast-high for the War, and had long ago put class and party spirit far behind them. It is not too much to say that a good deal of this orator’s eloquence offended

them and that, by their demonstrations of disapproval, they let him know it. And yet, although they manifested their dissent and left the hall, he seemed unable to alter the quite inappropriate tone of his speech, and one felt at the end that he had missed a great opportunity—if, indeed, he had not done positive harm.

The following morning I found myself in the middle of a far greater crowd assembled, as on the previous evening, to support the War, the whole War, and nothing but the War; on this occasion they were not disappointed. It was the day of the departure for the Front of a regiment of volunteer cyclists, drawn from Lombardy in general and from Milan in particular. They had camped overnight, 500 strong, in the plains some thirty kilometres from Milan and were scheduled to arrive at 9.30 A.M. to make their triumphal progress through the city. But although there was plenty of triumph, there was very little progress: in fact the density of the crowds and the frenzied enthusiasm of the streets, which were black with people, made any sort of parade-advance impossible on the part of the regiment that was vainly struggling to get to the Front. Each soldier became the centre of a crowd of wild admirers, who stuck flags in his

coat, bouquets in the barrel of his rifle, ribbons in his cap, garlanded his bicycle with flowers, and embraced him within an inch of his life. Vainly did the bugles attempt to sound the call to re-form ; they were utterly drowned by the cheering of many multitudes, carried away by the ecstasy of war fever and surging like a human ocean down and across all the thoroughfares of the city. There was no attempt to 'keep the course' for the regiment ; I doubt whether it would have been possible under the circumstances. But it seemed to be part of a pre-conceived plan, though it certainly involved loss of time, to allow the populace to mix with their soldier-heroes as freely as they chose, and so to spread and intensify in all classes the delirium of enthusiasm for a most popular war. How that regiment re-formed will ever remain a mystery to me ; but when I saw it again at midday, some ten kilometres outside Milan, racing along towards Brescia, it showed no sign of the recent turmoil. The men were riding four abreast in companies, waving their flags and shouting '*Viva l'Italia, Viva la Guerra !*' as they rode—a splendid bevy of clean-limbed athletes who, with their ambulances and transports, made as fine a fighting regiment as one could wish to see.

AN DIE DEUTSCHEN SOLDATEN

Italien hat jetzt auch das Schwert für die gerechte Sache ergriffen.

Es kämpft jetzt auch Schulter an Schulter mit den zivilisierten Völkern gegen die Barbaren, Lügner, Falscher und Verbrecher.

Italien hat euch am 24 Mai

DEN KRIEG ERKLÄRT

Italien zieht ins Feld mit:

2.000.000 Soldaten

3.000 Feldgeschütze (französische 75 Kanonen)

Eine zahlreiche schwere Artillerie (Krüppsche 15 cm. und französische 12 cm.)

Es ist Gottes Urteil!

LEAFLET THROWN BY THE THOUSAND INTO THE GERMAN LINES FROM
FRENCH AEROPLANES

TO THE GERMAN SOLDIERS

Italy, too, has now drawn the sword in the cause of justice. She, too, is now fighting shoulder to shoulder with the civilised nations—against barbarians, liars, forgers, and criminals.

Italy declared war upon you on May 24. Italy brings into the field 2,000,000 soldiers, 3000 field-guns (French 75 mm.), and numerous heavy artillery (Krupp's 15 cm. and French 12 cm.).

It is the judgment of God!

So much for the external signs to show the fine spirit of the Italian people at the present critical moment; but that is only important up to a certain point. Much more telling was the evidence of quiet preparation to deal with the ravages of war, the nursing of the wounded from the Front, and the disposition of the refugees who arrive by hundreds starving and homeless from Austria. In the same calm spirit which they evinced when they learned of the loss of their ships, the Milanese population have got everything in readiness to deal with these two important problems. Italy did not waste her time during the months which preceded her entry into the German War. She had sent a commission of experts to study the medical and sanitary arrangements—both of Germany and France—at the Front, and the fruits of these investigations were of immense importance to her when she herself was drawn into the vortex. Thanks to them, Italy was able to avoid a number of mistakes and deficiencies from which we, the older Allies, had suffered in the earlier stages, and also to choose for her example the best among competing and very different systems.

The position of the Red Cross in Italy, as a

recognised auxiliary of the military establishment, was transparently clear from the outset. In it there are military grades given and regulation uniforms worn by men and women alike; the discipline is as remarkable as the devotion is widespread throughout all ranks of both sexes, and the same remark applies to the service of the Maltese Cross (corresponding to our St. John Ambulance Association), which works in perfect harmony with the Red Cross. Both of these have provided a number of hospital trains, which have been running since the beginning of the War, each staffed with the personnel of the Society which presented them—a priest, religious sisters, doctors, and an operating-theatre on each train. The Red Cross also run canteens and small emergency wards—for dressing wounds and minor operations—at the principal stations; these are served in shifts of four hours each, each lady and gentleman undertaking to take two turns in every twenty-four hours. I was allowed to visit these at all hours and found them, whether in the afternoon or at two o'clock in the morning, always busy, always bright, exceedingly efficient and immensely appreciated.

The hospitals in Milan, head quarters of the

Third Army in peace-time, number over forty, and there are forty more, in the region of which Milan is the centre. In the city itself a large number of these have had to be improvised, and it was in the 'converted' hospitals that I saw the most striking proofs of efficiency and resource. An enormous emporium belonging to Signor Bocconi—it was described to me as a sort of 'Whiteley's'—had been transformed into a hospital with 250 beds in the short space of three weeks, and it was not difficult to realise that those who were responsible for the transformation were also connoisseurs in the 'last word' of up-to-date hospital requirements. Then a huge primary school in the Via d'Arena was now prepared for 250 beds, with wonderful arrangements below-stairs for baths and douches, as well as an enormous kitchen, all provided by the rate-payers for the benefit of the children attending the school. I visited also a Deaf and Dumb College, now full of wounded, a Ladies' Medical College (De Marché), which had doubled its bed-accommodation and was splendidly equipped with all the latest scientific appliances; a beautiful private house presented by the Commercial Bank as a hospital for officers, and a Training Home for

Nurses (the Hospital Yolanda), whose Directress told me that she had derived all her inspiration for the installation of this quite admirable Home from similar institutions which she had visited in England. She is also superintending the transformation of the Monastery of Sta Maria delle Grazie into a large hospital: this is the institution in whose refectory stands the wonderful frescoed representation of the Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci, now hidden and completely protected (let us hope) by a mountain of sandbags from the savage assault of an enemy to whom the combination of a hospital and a work of art has hitherto presented an irresistible target. Last but not least, I was shown the Hospital Zonda (250 beds), one of the scientific glories of the city and worthy in every way to be compared to the Rothschild Hospital which I visited some years ago in Vienna and then considered the best that I had seen in Europe. All the foregoing, and many others which unfortunately I had not time to see, were run by the Red Cross and do not include an equal number of hospitals managed entirely by the military authorities. To the principal door of each hospital is run a branch tram-line from the trunk system

which belongs to the Municipality. This scheme was new to me and I was greatly impressed by it. Herein lies its value for the wounded: the hospital train arrives at the railway station and all the light cases are discharged. Instead of being conveyed to hospital by half-dozens in ambulances which, however carefully driven over the streets, must sometimes jolt and jar their inmates, these 'sitting-up' patients are marshalled into trams waiting for them at the station and are transported in large batches over smooth lines to the very door of the institution that is waiting to receive them. I saw several trains cleared in this way, which is quick, practical, and humane; it is also economical in the long run, as it necessitates the use of only sufficient ambulances to convoy the graver cases to hospital.

Another lesson which Italy has learnt, at the beginning of her trial, from taking a close interest in the war-experience of other nations, is the necessity of helping the War Office to enable families to get rapidly into touch with their wounded as soon as they arrive in hospital. To this end the Red Cross has organised an Enquiry Department at a number of important hospital centres, of which Milan is one. Each of these

is responsible for getting full lists daily from every hospital within the area assigned to it and also such supplementary information, regarding deaths on the battle-field and in the clearing-hospitals, as can be supplied by the regimental depots situated in each particular region. All this information is duly card-indexed and is accessible to all enquirers ; it is also sent forward in duplicate to Bologna where is the Clearing House for all information and for such enquiries as cannot be satisfied at the provincial centres. In Milan this work occupies a very large staff, since the Third Army is one of those most heavily engaged at the present stage of military operations, and consequently an unending stream of letters and visitors pours into the office every day. The staff are housed in a big commercial college and have ample room for expansion, but, being perfectly aware of the rapidity with which their work is increasing every week, and will still further increase, they do not waste an inch of space, for they feel that it will all be wanted soon. The organisation for tracing prisoners is centred in Rome and is, I hear, in fair working order already, thanks to the good relations previously existing between the Austrian and Italian Red Cross

Societies, who now exchange lists with a regularity which is creditable, considering the difficulties of inter-communication which confront them both.

It only remains for me to notice the arrangements which I saw made for the reception of Italian refugees from Austria ; they were coming in very fast during the days I spent in Milan. All this particular branch of work has been made over by the Government to a philanthropic society called the Opera Bonamelli which, in peace-time, keeps a fatherly eye upon the welfare of Italian emigrants to other parts of Europe. Thus they have in being a system admirably adapted to do exactly this class of work, and it is greatly to the credit of the Government that it should have employed an existing agency to do the work which, on a smaller scale, it has always done, rather than invent some new organisation to undertake it, or include the care of refugees in the responsibilities of one or other of the political departments of State. As it is, the work runs smoothly enough. The Opera Bonamelli has had for a long time one branch with the necessary buildings at Buchs, on the Austro-Swiss frontier, and another at Chiasso. It is therefore comparatively easy for the Austrians to gather the

Italians living in the region around the Trentino and Trieste and send them in trains to Buchs, where they are met by 'missioners' and escorted in another train to Chiasso, and so to Milan where they are reclothed and looked after until homes are found for them elsewhere in Italy. In this work another society at Milan, a Socialist undertaking called the Umanitorio, bears its full part and receives its share of the refugees whom war has driven back penniless into their own country.

These, then, were the arrangements that I was privileged to see during my flying visit to the Sunny South, where a spirit of feverish energy and calm capacity has completely ousted the *dolce far niente* school of life. Of the military I saw little, except the wounded soldiers returned from the Front. But the indomitable spirit of these men who have been fighting at altitudes of 10,000 feet, having dragged up their cannon and ammunition and supplies over trackless mountain passes of incredible difficulty, is the spirit which will carry all before it. Owing to the nature of their battle-ground they have suffered privations and discomforts unknown to either of the opposing armies on the western front—the Austrian prisoners say that fighting in the Carpathians



A GALLANT AUSTRIAN PRISONER (NINETEEN BAYONET WOUNDS)



AUSTRIAN PRISONER CAMP IN NORTH ITALY

was child's play compared to their struggles in the Venetian and Julian Alps—and yet I thought these men surpassed all others in the intensity of their sheer love of fighting and in their passion to get back to death-grips with the foe.

CHAPTER XIV

WAR AND THE CHURCH

The Fall of Materialism—The Furnace of Pain—Regeneration—
Scenes in the Churches—Soldier-Priests—Our Shortage—
Burial of General Hamilton—Mass under Fire—A Funeral
Sermon—The Hermit—A Belgian Priest—Recognition—
General de Castelnau

As we peer into the darkness of the future to try to learn what it has in store for the nations of the world, I, for one, would wish to be able to see how far the cause of religion will be furthered by the agonies of the fiery trial through which we are now passing. I start with a prejudice; for it is my firm conviction, as it is my fervent hope, that the cult of materialism (which is perhaps the basic cause of all our troubles—of German aggression and of French and British unpreparedness) has been riven to its foundations, and that the old altars of a fairer faith have already reclaimed millions of worshippers who but yesterday staked their all upon the omnipotence and omniscience of the gods of gold. These have melted away in the furnace of war; from them come neither

courage nor consolation : and so a world in tears turns back and grasps the outstretched hand of the Man of Sorrows. That, at any rate, is my impression derived from close attention to this particular feature of life in France.

The Law of Separation was hard enough : it parted the Church from the State ; despoiled the former of much of its property, and exiled large numbers of its personnel. But a Law of Separation between Man and God is so hard as to be impossible. When wars come, and human nature lies naked and bleeding beneath the harrow of death, then the State is dissolved in the Man and the Church in his Maker : there is no law that can keep these apart from one another ; the prodigal son returns to his Father's home. The witness of my own eyes proves this to me, and statistics overwhelmingly confirm the evidence of my vision. In the course of my journeys, over many hundreds of miles in Northern France, I have visited scores of churches in town and village—morning, noon, and evening, Sunday and week-day alike. In all of these one became at last familiar with the same phenomenon : large numbers of men and women making their Communion at the Low Masses, seats crowded at High Mass, churches

packed for the religious exercises and devotions in the afternoons, silent prayer before the altars all day long. The Bishop and the parish priest point to figures of reclaimed communicants, of confessions increased, of baptisms and vows renewed—all of which support the widespread belief that the Faith is coming back to its own. As for the festivals, they are all celebrated with greater pomp and deeper devotion than for a century past—so fervently, indeed, as to cause a flutter of anxiety in the hearts of some who still wish them evil. In Paris, during Holy Week, the sermons of Père Janvier (the Orateur de Notre-Dame) to men only, crowded the nave of that marvellous cathedral—wounded and scarred by the bombs of the enemy—night after night; every Sunday, from Advent to Trinity, Père Sertillange packed the Madeleine from end to end with a congregation that filled the church two hours before his sermons began; the ceremonies of the Fête Dieu, also at the Madeleine, when the Holy Sacrament is carried in procession round the high terrace that encircles the church, seemed almost a challenge to the civil authority to interfere at its peril. This open-air solemnity was witnessed by thousands of people and reached its culminating

point in significance and devotion when the parish priest, surrounded by his staff of clergy and choristers and religious guilds, facing down the Rue Royale and across the Seine to the Chamber of Deputies, elevated the Host and blessed the assembled multitude. So in the villages for Corpus Christi: I happened to be travelling through Normandy on that Sunday afternoon and saw immense processions winding through the streets of the larger villages and wayside shrines erected in them all. So passionately do men and women guard the recovered treasure of which they have been robbed, the ideal which they believe to have been insulted; the intensity of their renewed protection of it can only be measured by the violence of their resentment at the outrage offered. And I would add that thousands of those who, for this reason or for that, have deserted from the Church's colours in time of peace, are now to be found in the vanguard of her protectors in the day of battle.

The other day at the Front, I came across some little cards that were being distributed among the soldiers. Beneath a group of coloured flags they bore these simple words: 'Heart of Jesus, be Thou the Saviour of France.' This pious ejaculation

disturbed one of the 'Free-thought' journals in Paris, which objected thus: 'Does France need to be saved—from what? From the dangers by which she is threatened from the men in black with their subtle and underground propaganda: we know of no other.' To this absurd observation the *Figaro* justly retorted that it savoured of exaggeration to suggest that the only danger to France just now is 'the peril of the clergy.'

No, the peril—if peril there be—is to those who have for so long traduced the French clergy, in every mood and tense, as unpatriotic and un-French. To their horror they find some fifty thousand priests and five hundred Abbés and several Bishops serving in the ranks of the Army, often mentioned in the orders of the day and receiving decorations for valour upon many a field of battle! I have read letters from the Front in which their lay-comrades pay unsurpassed tributes to the serene heroism of the soldier-priests beside them; I have even been jealous that, in the ranks of the British Army, so small a place is found for our clergy—and I, for one, shall never rest content until room is found for at least one priest in every hospital and one with every regiment in reserve. Gradually, by slow degrees, we are



MASS UNDER FIRE

Photo, Topical

improving in this direction, but we are still lamentably short of spiritual ammunition for the protection of the souls of our troops. I am, of course, conscious of the 'denominational' difficulties in regiments of 'mixed' religions, but even these are not insurmountable. At Verdun, for example, this very question arose with regard to the burial of a large number of soldiers belonging to the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths in the French Army. Everybody agreed that some religious ceremony was obligatory, and therefore the priest and the pastor and the Rabbi—all military chaplains—went together to the cemetery. The Rabbi, as senior chaplain, delivered the address and offered a general prayer; after which the priest in Latin, the pastor in French, and the Rabbi in Hebrew, said their customary prayers over the graves of their respective co-religionists.

I recognise also the difficulties attendant upon the fact that, in our Army, the chaplain has at present to be a mounted non-combatant officer, whose existence at the Front entails a number of non-effective mouths to feed; for this reason the number of chaplains has to be strictly limited. But the civilian is entitled to wonder whether these difficulties would not disappear supposing

each infantry battalion had its own chaplain with it—not necessarily a commissioned officer—marching and messing with his unit, instead of one priest having to career upon a horse over miles of country to endeavour to minister to the spiritual wants of a whole brigade. It is all really a question of the right conception of the place that religion must play in the life and death of man, and of the help that its authorised ministers can give to our soldiers when their need is greatest. The Germans in one way, the French in quite another, provide the necessary benefit of clergy ; I wish that I felt I could assert that our country does the same.

The following short stories, which I have either heard or read during the past year, give some idea of the lives of priests at the Front. I hope that the sources from which I have derived them will forgive this reproduction, without permission, of human documents which redound to the credit and courage of those who are sometimes cruelly alluded to as ‘ the black peril.’

THE BURIAL OF GENERAL HAMILTON

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note.

In the dead of night, beneath a veil of impenetrable darkness, small groups of soldiers were

gathered together. Representatives of the General Staff, a few French officers attached to the British Army, some non-commissioned officers and men (whose faces I could not see, for no gleam of light was possible at this spot, so close to the enemy's lines) were assembled in a deserted village to pay their last homage to the memory of a gallant officer who had died for the common cause. That very morning he had been killed outright by a single shrapnel bullet whilst riding about among his troops. In the evening, under the gracious cover of darkness, an ambulance went out to recover the body and bring it back to the village where, with striking simplicity, the warrior was laid to his last rest. Slowly, in the black night, the procession passed down the death-still street, lined on either side by a double rank of soldiers—grim silhouettes, fully armed and expecting a night attack at any moment. So to the cemetery, by the little church whose roof and altar alike have been shattered by shell from the German guns. There they had prepared the grave for their beloved chief, and there they laid him down. But the service had scarcely begun when there burst upon the chill night air the familiar but ever fearsome sound of cannon: a shell, another,

a hundred more ; the deafening sound of terrific firing all round us ; bullets whistling over our heads as we stood by the side of the tomb. It was the expected attack from a few hundred yards away.

Did Heaven decree that the enemy should choose just this solemn moment to engage us, and that we should be firing ball-cartridge across his grave not only to salute his memory, but, alas ! to avenge his death ?

Yet, amid all this roar of battle, thundering tempestuously round the walls of the village church, the priest, in calm and even tones, continued and concluded the service for the Burial of the Dead.

MASS UNDER FIRE

In the last five days there have been five desperate street fights outside our hospital. The Sisters found bullets in their beds, and eight shells fell on their convent. The fury of the cannonading was maddening.

Last Friday, a soldier-priest got leave to come and say Mass in the chapel attached to the hospital. Another priest from the Red Cross assisted him as a server.

‘ Come along, Sister,’ said the soldier, ‘ we

haven't time for long meditations this morning: our moments are very precious.' So we got everything ready and Mass began: the server's responses were entirely drowned by the noise of the guns outside. . . . He was really a brave young fellow, but very pale, I thought, and rather absent-minded perhaps. No doubt he could not help following the course of the battle, even on his knees. We reached the Offertory . . . a grinding crash fell upon the chapel . . . a fearful explosion shook the hospital to its base . . . a long, long moan of anguish followed as four poor officers were carried away on stretchers. The priest, who had paused for a moment, went on with his prayers, but his server seemed turned to stone as he knelt huddled against the wall, saying no responses and ringing no bell. Our Superior made signs to him, but they had no effect at all. The Sisters knelt down to receive their Communion when another shell burst right over us, smashing every window in the place. This time it fell just outside the west-end door. In the heart of this hell the Sisters made their Communion, . . . but nothing could rouse our server from his trance.

When he came to himself, the Superior said: 'But, my dear Father, you quite forgot the

ablutions: you must be very distraught this morning.'

'Forgive me, Mother,' he answered, 'I believe I was *mummified*.' And perhaps he was, for the moment; but since then he has won the much coveted medal for bravery in the field.

A FUNERAL SERMON

At last, Sunday broke and our turn was over; but it was 'hot' while it lasted. We brought the battery out of action through a ruined street and unharnessed our horses. Then we washed and brushed ourselves as best we could, and retired to a shell-torn barn to hear Mass. The captain of our guns was a priest; his altar a few empty cartridge-boxes, upon which he laid the stone. He vested very quickly—but his fatigue cap looked rather odd doing duty for a biretta. Of course we had a sermon, and a very good one too. Our priest's sermons sound just like a fellow talking to his friends. First of all he told us to pray for all for whom he was going to offer the Mass. Then he added, 'Particularly I recommend to your prayers the German artillerymen whom we have just destroyed,' and he recited the 'De Profundis.'

THE HERMIT

On the Franco-Belgian frontier, not two-hundred yards from the German trenches, lives a hermit in his cell! Before the War he was a monk, now he is in charge of a battery of artillery and lives in a sort of cock-loft in a cliff, which he has converted into an artillery observation post, which he has not left for the last six weeks. It is a long climb up to his cell—a tiny little cave-dwelling furnished with a straw mattress, a broken chair, a rickety table, and a dark lantern;—that is all. His men are relieved every twenty-four hours; but he never ‘quits,’ as the Americans say, though his only means of communication with the outer world is the telephone that speaks to head quarters. Now and then, when things are quiet, they can get food to him, but his position is too exposed to allow of this happening often. At one time he had to go three days without any drinking-water; but he was quite cheerful and slaked his thirst by getting a little of the briny water from the floods (whose contents are, as you know, horrible in the extreme), boiling it, and moistening his lips with the drops of steam that formed on the lid of his little saucepan.

The other day a shell paid him a visit; but although it exploded in his cell, he got off with a burnt finger.

If you ask him whether life under such solitary conditions is not intolerable, he says, 'Oh dear no! I never was so happy. The time passes like lightning. I do my 'house-work'; I keep an eye on my men below, I telephone my observations, and my conscience tells me that I am of some use to my country.'

The words '*Vive le Roi*' are scratched with a penknife on the bare wall of the cell: these and his little crucifix represent the whole duty of this soldier-saint.

A BELGIAN PRIEST

Nieuport in Belgium has been the scene of many tragedies since the War began, and among the saddest was the pathetic end of the aged priest of St. George. The terrors of the War at last became too much for him: a shell burst in his presbytery, and the soldiers only just managed to save him from death beneath the ruins. Then he went mad and wandered about the country, sometimes getting right into the line of fire.

One day he was discovered grubbing about

in a ditch wherein the Germans had recently buried some of their dead. He thought they had also hidden there a statue of the Blessed Virgin which they had stolen out of his church. The Belgian troopers had to drag him by force into one of their trenches and keep him there, as the enemy fire was intensely fierce at that moment. Suddenly the old man imagined that it was time for him to go to church for Evensong, but he was not allowed to move. Then, in his dear old broken voice, he began to sing the 'Salve Regina,' and a thrill of deep emotion surged along the trench.

His last adventure was upon a broken-down old horse which he had picked up on the battle-field, wounded and limping painfully along on three legs. He climbed on to its back and rode down the lines, shouting to the soldiers, 'Courage! Hold fast, my sons! I am St. George. The Day of Judgment is breaking. St. George is ever victorious.'

Amid a hail of shells he proceeded, until one burst just in front of him; whereupon his decrepid steed took fright and bolted towards the village. The next shell wounded the old man and unseated him; his foot caught in the stirrup, and he was dragged head downwards over the cruel paving

stones of the village street. Unconscious, he was carried on, until the debris of a falling factory buried both horse and rider in its ruins.

Who will deny that such exhibitions of courage, endurance, and martyrdom, of which the foregoing narratives are but samples, are no more than good seed sown in a barren land? Who will suggest that, when this bloody war is over, the men who grasped the hand of their chaplain-comrade in the hour of supreme anguish, who received from him in the trenches the Sacrament which brings comfort and courage, will spurn that hand in the coming days of peace? Already we can read, if we will, the testimony of thousands of families in France to the devotion with which the soldier-almoner soothed the last moments of their soldier-sons—such ministrations will not be counted against the agents of the ‘black peril,’ but will break down the parliamentary barrier raised between the Church and the nation. The *Bulletin des Armées* and the *Journal Officiel* have, in almost every issue, their story of gallantry and splendid heroism to record in favour of men and women who have taken the religious vows and are now working under fire in trench and hospital. The strength



GENERAL DE CASTLENAU

of the supernatural is once more familiar in France ; there is nothing more usual now than an exchange of letters between Generals-in-Command and Bishops in whose dioceses they are operating. I quote from a note written by General de Castelnau to the Archbishop of Auch :—

More than ever do I now feel how tremendous a part is played in this war, as elsewhere, by what we choose to call the great ‘Unknown.’ This Unknown is manifestly controlled by Him who knows all, sees all, directs all.

I thank you for your fervent prayers to the Most High that He will bless our arms, and that He will enlighten me, the humble instrument of His holy will. It is a comfort to me to have the support of such souls as yours ; it increases my confidence in the ultimate result. . . .

So too, from other sources, we can anticipate the splendour of coming events. A Free-thinker—or one who gave himself out to be such in peace-time—writes thus from the battle-field to his wife :—

Above all, teach our little one to say his prayers. Go to Mass yourself. You will think of me upon your knees.

Another, on the eve of going into action, said frankly to the priest, ‘Monsieur le Curé, I have no religion, but I do want to meet my wife

in a future life ; what must I do ? ’ ‘ Prepare yourself, dear friend, and you will see her : as for religion, you must truly confess that you believe what Holy Church believes.’ ‘ So be it, Monsieur le Curé ; will you hear my confession ? ’ ¹

The fight in France has been a long one between Faith and Agnosticism ; both have fought their hardest, and the casualties have been heavy among the children of Light. Now, from the ‘ Great Unknown,’ have come the reinforcements of suffering and sorrow ; they have stemmed the tide of battle ; they are marching with the Church to victory.

¹ Read *Le Clergé, Les Catholiques, et La Guerre*, by Gabriel Langlois.

CHAPTER XV

FROM MY DAY-BOOK

The Eikon—Legend of Arras—Czenstochowa—Saint Sofia—A Spy Story—Christmas in Lille

THERE is an interesting legend connected with the eikon which was hurriedly sent for whilst the present King of Greece lay in a critical condition during his recent illness. I translate the story from a Greek newspaper, the *Athens Messenger* :

In the early days of the War of Independence an old gardener in Tinos saw the MOST HOLY in a dream. ‘Dig thou diligently in the field of Doxaras : there shalt thou find My eikon.’

So the old gardener and his friends did as they were commanded, and digged in the field of Doxaras, but discovered naught save an ancient oven that had been fashioned out of bricks. Once more, in the year following, the Holy Spirit appeared—in the guise of a lady, beautiful, but sad—to Sister Pelagia of the Monastery of Saint Nicolas.

‘Dig thou diligently in the field of Doxaras : why have ye tarried so long in the building of Mine House ?’

So they digged again ; but there was not one who knew that in the year One Thousand a church,

afterwards burnt by the Saracens, had stood upon that place where they digged.

There they found the ruins of the church, the sacred vessels and the candlesticks, and a stream of pure water flowed beneath the stones. So they builded a church over it, and it was dedicated to the Fountain of Life, which is the Mother of God.

A year later the Holy Spirit appeared again to the Sister and commanded : ‘Dig deeper yet.’

‘We have digged all, Most Holy, and have builded Thee Thy temple.’

‘Dig on, until thou hast uncovered My eikon.’

So they continued to dig, until at length the image was uncovered.

And in that moment did the Mother of God show forth Her presence by a miracle. For the plague which scourged the island did immediately cease from destroying the people.

Such was the tradition of yesterday ; and now we learn that no sooner had His Majesty clasped this eikon to his breast than the agonies ceased and the King made progress toward recovery. The Queen, in thanksgiving for the miracle, took a favourite jewel from her necklace to decorate the frame of the eikon.

‘But,’ the *Athens Messenger* goes on to state, ‘since the German professors Krauss and Eilselsberg have arrived upon the scene from Berlin, the royal patient has not been feeling so well.’ It

is a curious fact that these learned gentlemen left Athens the next day after the recent elections.

THE HOLY CANDLE OF ARRAS

Arras is laid waste by war, but the church of Notre-Dame des Ardents still stands uninjured by German shell fire. Herein rests a relic, ten centuries old—the Holy Candle—encased in a shrine of silver and enamel, given to the Church in 1421 by Jean de Sasquepee, the Lord of Beaudimont and Mayor of Arras. The legend runs that, in 1105, a terrible plague depopulated Arras, and men were at their wits' end for fear. But on a certain night the Holy Virgin appeared to two troubadors, Normand and Stiers, and put into their hands a taper, with an assurance that, if pure water were mixed with its wax, the sick and dying would be cured of their plague. The precious ointment thus miraculously given was handed to Lambert, the Bishop of Arras, who applied the remedy with instant success, and in gratitude founded the Community of Les Ardents, which has jealously guarded this mysterious treasure down to this present day.

Across the ages it has ever been the salvation of Arras from foreign domination, if not always

from bombardment and siege. The Atrebates (inhabitants of Arras) are secure in their belief that the miracle of the Holy Candle will soon be performed once more to preserve them from the hateful rule of the modern Huns.

[*Translation : December 1914.*]

OUR LADY OF CZENSTOCHOWA

In the early days of October 1914, the Emperor William II of Germany made his head quarters in the Convent of Yasna Gova in Poland ; there, too, he made his first great mistake, in the country where defeat awaited him, and the immediate result was the uprising of the whole Polish population against the invader. Only those who understand the spirit of Poland will appreciate the intimate connection between the cause and this effect. The Poles are less wedded to their worldly possessions, to their estates, or even to their lives, than they are to their Faith. They are far less anxious to take vengeance for their houses laid in ashes and for their ruined crops than to requite the outrages levelled at the God of their fathers. So the Germans could have hurled at Poland no insult more poignant than the violation of the sanctuary of Czenstochowa.

This little town clusters round the Convent of Yasna Gova, 'the City of Light,' a fortress-sanctuary, a place of refuge and prayer (like so many other mediæval monasteries), which possesses the palladium of Polish Catholicism—a picture of the Blessed Virgin holding the infant Jesus in her arms. Legend ascribes to St. Luke himself the painting of this portrait, which the Empress St. Helena has venerated. It was brought by Prince Leo into Galicia in very early days, and in 1382 a certain Duke Vladislas, the founder of the Convent of Yasna-Gova, entrusted it to the care of that community as shield and buckler against the ravages of the Tartar hosts. In Polish history Czenstochowa was constantly menaced, but fearful chastisement was the invariable fate of those who attempted to invade the sanctuary of Our Lady. Never was the result of her powerful protection more clearly manifested than in the famous siege of 1655 by Charles Gustavus. He had subdued the whole of Poland; his armies completely overwhelmed the country, leaving desolation and ruin in their wake. Poland seemed dead—she was to be re-born at Czenstochowa.

The invader had solemnly guaranteed by

Letters Patent the inviolability of their convent ; he had sworn that it should never know the burden of military occupation. But perjury had no more terrors for him than it has for a more modern monarch of another country. His troops were consumed with a desire to ravage the treasures consecrated to the Virgin, to profane a spot sacred to Poland beyond all others. As elsewhere—and as to-day—his soldiers thought nothing of gambling in the churches, of broaching their casks of beer upon the altars, nor of celebrating their disgusting rites in the very presence of the Glorious Master of the Tabernacle. Charles Gustavus treated his Letters Patent as ‘mere scraps of paper’ ; and so, one day at dusk, his valiant army, ten thousand strong, appeared before the town to make mincemeat of a garrison which consisted of the Abbot with seventy poor monks and ten score of the peasants and gentry of the neighbourhood. The invaders issued their decree, and thus it ran : ‘In the name of the Most Serene King of the Goths and Vandals . . . Grand Duke of Bremen, Stettin . . . etc.,’ the monks resident are summoned ‘to entrust their monastery to the safe custody of the General without fear, in so far as the exigencies of war can provide

it.' How like the sort of ultimatum sent by William II, or by one of his generals, to the King of the Belgians, or to one or other of the brave cities in Flanders !

As I have said, the town was not fortified ; for no one, in those days, imagined that either Tartar or heathen hosts would lay hands upon a sacred city. And yet, by some divine inspiration, these indomitable monks declined to surrender. They had no confidence in the enemy, who added infidelity to the perjured oath of their employer. They refused point-blank to yield their monastery to the unbeliever or their sanctuary into the hands of sacrilege. Thus began the famous siege, by ten thousand trained soldiers against a mere handful of men armed, for the most part, with flails and pitch-forks and scythes. For thirty-eight days it lasted ; generals of renown, the best of artillery, schemed and thundered against the town, but in vain. In vain they sent for their heaviest mortars and shelled the ramparts ; it made no difference. Nothing could shatter the courage or the serenity of these splendid knights of the Virgin, who, though under fire of the most severe description, marched daily round the battlements, chanting their

canticles and carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession.

At last the general, surprised and discouraged, retired; the resurrection of Poland crucified was accomplished. The words of St. Augustine were brought to mind: 'Non tollit Gothus quod custodit Christus'—'The Goth cannot seize the possession of Christ.'

The echoes of this battle waged against Our Lady reverberated throughout all Poland, from the Baltic to the Black Sea; from the Carpathian Mountains to the Steppes of Russia. At the news of this act of sacrilege, the nation rose as one man to avenge the outrage and repel the enemy, the implacable foe of nationality and Faith. Once more the Blessed Mother gave birth to the soul of a people, and by their courage her wrongs were redressed.

Charles Gustavus was defeated. How will it fare with William II of Germany? He, too, has invaded a peaceful population; he has broken his pledged word, has tried to intimidate those whom he could not seduce to turn Poland from the path of duty. True, Czenstochowa lost her city walls under the Emperor Alexander I, and resistance is now impossible; but she remains a

Holy Place that has never been assaulted with impunity. All Poland is now in arms against the foreign iconoclast. His defeat is at hand; the expiation of his sacrilege is assured.

[*Translation : November 1914.*]

SAINT SOFIA—CONSTANTINOPLE

Not long ago, I remember our guide showing us, high up on the inner shell of the vast dome of the cathedral, the shadowy outline of a gigantic crucifix. One's eyes had to become accustomed to the solemn twilight of that great Byzantine basilica before it was possible to discern, across the glimmer of the hanging lamps, the Divine Figure traced in golden mosaic which the Turks, after taking Constantinople, had hidden beneath a thick layer of Oriental whitewash. But the orthodox faithful, living on the banks of the Bosphorus, 'the sweet waters of Asia,' have a tradition that when this image of God Crucified is again visible, the reign of the Sultans of Turkey will be at an end.

Week by week, during the past few months, the picture of the Crucifixion is emerging more and more distinctly from its shroud of chalk: the features of the Christ, the lines of the Cross, are

now definite and distinct. There is still something like a morning haze between the spectator and this interesting mosaic, but the Sun of Victory will soon disperse the remaining shadows, and then at last the Christians will gaze upon the picture before which Justinian prayed.

[*Translation : April 1915.*]

HOME AGAIN

In France some Alsatian soldiers were discussing the first thing they would do when they had won back the province for France. Said one of them : ' I shall go straight to the churchyard where my people lie buried. I shall dig a deep hole and cry aloud to them, ' We have returned.' '

THE CHANGELINGS

(*Told by a French Gendarme*)

One afternoon when we were waiting about and smoking our pipes beside a little wood on the flank of our reserve trenches, we noticed a fine-looking sergeant-inspector of police and two ordinary constables advancing towards us, in charge of a German Uhlan prisoner. They were walking quite leisurely, and appeared to take the utmost interest in all that they saw. Our fellows

in the advance trenches greeted them with a cheer, and they returned it with a will. As they approached us our sergeant whispered 'Attention,' and we all sprang to our feet. 'Prepare to fire,' he said; 'three gendarmes to one Uhlan is—odd.' When they were quite close we moved out from the shelter of the wood and challenged them.

'Who goes there? Show us your papers.'

'Who are you?' replied the 'sergeant-inspector.'

'Who am I? Out with your papers and up with your hands!' was the answer.

Like one man we all had our rifles at the 'present.'

'*O kamerades!*' whimpered the two constables and the Uhlan.

'*O kamerades!*' faltered the 'sergeant-inspector'—and the game was up.

We bound the spies together in pairs and brought them into camp.

A MIDNIGHT MASS

LILLE, December 24, 1914.

To-morrow is Christmas Day. What can be happening in France? I hear no Christmas bells.

For two months I have been imprisoned in this invested city—and to-morrow is Christmas Day.

From my little attic-window I can see right over the roofs of my native town; its chimneys are smoking. I wonder whether our little ones in the nurseries below are watching and waiting for Father Christmas with his load of presents, as they did last year when life was—oh! so sweet!

Lille seems quite noisy to-night. The cold wind freezes and scares me. It comes from far across the broads of the Yser. It has scoured the field of battle; its breath has quickened the cheery wood fires in the trenches. To me it wafts a sense of dampness, the scent of blood upon the soaking earth.

I hear German soldiers laughing as they march along the streets. They are going into the hotel across the way, to eat and drink round the lighted Christmas Tree. They are talking very loud; their conversation is my despair. I must not give way, though. I will go out, too, dressed like a peasant in the miserable old great-coat that they have given me. It is nine o'clock. I know a little chapel in a back street where a few French people are sure to meet for the midnight Mass; I will go in there. . . .

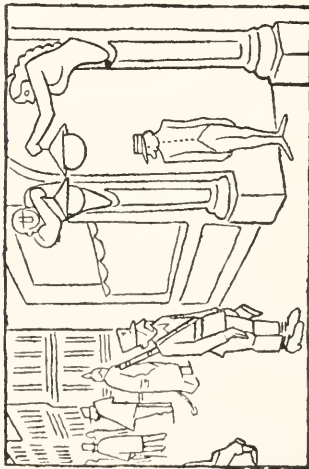
Kriegsflugblätter

Einblatt zur Lillen-Bringsäzning

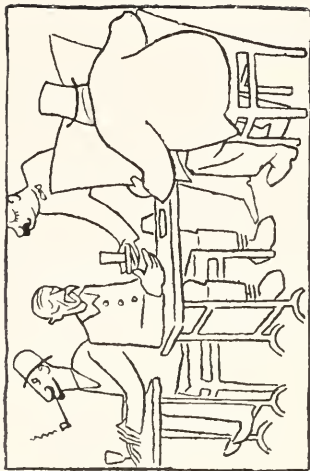
Nummer 24.

Lille, den 25. Februar 1915

Wie der Landsturmann Alois Kietzenberg in Lille ganz aus Versehen in
franzoesische Gefangenschaft kam.



„Aladabn. warum soll de Kietzenberg net smal in a felmes Restaurant!“



„Jessas na. bei dem Durst die kloante Glas'In!“

FACSIMILE (REDUCED) OF HALF A PAGE FROM THE KRIEGSFLUGBLÄTTER, OR WAR FLY-LEAVES,
THE SUPPLEMENT OF THE LILLE WAR TIMES, PUBLISHED BY THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION

Long shall I remember this Christmas eve ; as long as my life is spared. A few candles stand upon the altar ; kneeling before it are some Red Cross Sisters in their white head-dresses, some children, and a group of old men. Five Bavarians, sad-eyed young fellows of about nineteen, come in and kneel down beside us. I wonder why they should invade even our tiny sanctuary ; they cannot prevent us praying.

The little silver-tongued church bell chimes out its message into the Christmas sky—in tones that are as pure as the light, as bright as hope. It is midnight. Here comes our old priest, vested in his best chasuble. He gazes gravely upon us and blesses us ; even the Bavarians bend low to receive so unique a blessing. So Mass begins. I see some poor girls crouching in the doorway ; they are all in mourning. I hear the notes of a violin coming from the organ-loft, and voices are raised in the Christmas hymn :—

He is born, our heavenly King,
Shepherds pipe whilst angels sing.

Ah ! Christmas, Christmas ! no bastard authority, no wanton barbarities, no brute force can prevail against thee. Never have we known thee so pure, so lovely, as in this captive city in

the year of our torture. Never have we grasped so surely the lesson of thy simplicity ; on this night we waken to its wondrous beauty. Across the centuries thy voice rings out : ' I am the Christmas of the French ; lift up your hearts, and God will guard you.' An old lady beside me is quietly crying ; she has four sons at the Front. As she bends low to pray, I notice that her forehead just touches the shoulder of one of the Bavarians. She feels it, straightens herself, stiffens, and dries her eyes. . . .

The priest had said his third Mass ; we left the chapel and went our separate ways. All the streets were deserted ; the shutters were closed. The only sounds came from the public-houses wherein the German soldiery were allowed to carouse all through that sacred night.

There was no sound of cannons ; so our children in their warm little beds dreamed calmly on of General Joffre's zouaves tumbling down the chimney to guard them through their sleep.

*[Translation from the diary of a prisoner
in Lille : February 1915.]*



THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL

By MAURICE NEUMONT
(Reproduced by kind permission of the Artist)

A copy of this drawing was sent on Christmas Eve to every French soldier at the Front.

CHAPTER XVI

DOGS OF WAR

Dispatch-dogs—Four-footed Searchers—Wounded and Missing—
Société Nationale—A Popular Movement—Training the Dogs
—The Barbizon School—Killed in Action

WHEN I was attached to the British Embassy in Berlin some twenty years ago the Germans were just beginning to examine the question of the utility of dogs in time of war, mainly as dispatch-runners, and to make experiments with them. The results were so satisfactory that a military organisation was set up to choose and train dogs for this purpose, and now I hear that the German Army has something like 30,000 dogs working for it. The advantages of using dogs rather than men for carrying messages across country that is exposed to enemy fire are so obvious that I need not dwell upon them; but this is not the only use to which a properly trained dog can be put. He makes a wonderful sentry with the soldier on outpost duty at night, for he hears sounds that are inaudible to most human

ears, and he is taught to communicate his information to his master by the merest whisper of a growl, having learnt that, at all times and in all places, barking is quite inadmissible. Then his power of scent also is requisitioned—this time by the Medical and Red Cross authorities—to trace wounded men who, for one reason or another, have not been picked up during or immediately after a battle. In old days, but not so very long ago, large numbers of men were accounted ‘missing’ who had really died from exposure after their wounds, received in places where they could not be found. In the Franco-German War of 1870, for example, there were over 4000 Germans and close on 12,000 French reported ‘missing’; in the Russo-Japanese War in Manchuria, Follenfant estimates that on the Russian side 41 per thousand officers and 71 per thousand men ‘disappeared,’ whilst Doctor Matignon calculates that 53 Japanese officers and 5021 soldiers were ‘missing’ at the close of that campaign, and the wars in the Balkans gave similar evidence on about the same scale.

To reduce the number of casualties of this kind—more painful perhaps than any other—all armies have increased their ambulance and



DOGS OF WAR WITH RED CROSS BADGES

stretcher-bearer sections, whose duty it is, as soon as possible after an action, to quarter the ground and retrieve the helpless fallen. But it is obvious that in battles which last for weeks at a time, as they do in the present War, these expedients are comparatively useless, and recourse must be had to other methods. One French doctor invented a whistle, attached in some way to the soldier's identity disc, which he could blow when he could no longer call for assistance; this seemed practical until it was realised that, after engagements wherein the wounded could be counted by thousands, the sound of so many whistles would confuse and impede the operations of the Medical Corps. Another suggestion was that aeroplanes could scour the battle-field for wounded and report the result of their reconnaissance to the hospital authorities. But this, too, had to be discarded as impracticable: for the aeroplane could only search during the day-time, and from a considerable height, over open land. Its observer would fail to perceive the victim, motionless but alive, who has fallen in a deserted farm-house or has dragged himself to the cover of a plantation or the shelter of a neighbouring trench or dug-out. I need not add

that these expedients were considered and found wanting long before the opening of the present War, whose conditions would instantly preclude even experimenting with either of them.

Many years after the Germans had begun to create their army of dispatch-dogs, some French ladies and gentlemen founded in Paris an organisation called the Société Nationale du Chien Sanitaire, whose special function it was to train dogs to find the wounded hidden in the dark places of the battle-field. They called to mind, doubtless, the achievements of the famous race of St. Bernards, the prowess of the Parisian police-dogs, the cunning of the mongrel smugglers between Gibraltar and Algieras, and determined to bend all the endurance and courage and adaptibility of the canine race to this one purpose of noble philanthropy. The idea, warmly supported by the French military authorities, received a large measure of public favour, and the society, though only a small one, was able to offer several hundred dogs to the Army on the outbreak of war. These are being added to month by month, as new recruits pass the stiff tests to which they are subjected before they are allowed to leave the kennel for the Front. Already several branch organisations have been started,

and dogs are sent from far and near to be trained and used—either as gifts outright to the Army or as loans ‘for the duration of the War.’ At first the Society received all sorts of ineligible candidates, chows and griffons and fox-terriers, but these had to be returned with thanks, for they all lacked the stamina which are essential for dogs that must be able to endure rain and cold and to work without food for many hours at a stretch. The most welcome recruits were those of the ‘sheep-dog’ class—to give it a generic if unscientific name—for their noses are excellent, their intelligence is keen, and their coats are impervious to weather. In appearance they differ greatly from one another: curly-coated dogs from Brittany, smooth coats from Belgium, rough fellows from Alsace, and others of the Airedale and Scottish collie breeds, but all of them young and intelligent and desperately keen.

By the kindness of Mme. Kresser, the Lady-President, whose husband (the Secretary-General of the Society) is now serving at the Front, I was able to see something of the early training of these dogs in a large waste space not twenty minutes from the centre of Paris. There they have a kennel of about thirty dogs, who get their first lessons

in searching for wounded on ground as unlike the real thing as you can well imagine. A deep trench is dug here, a culvert is there; in one corner a gravel-pit, in another a square space enclosed with wire-netting fifteen feet high. One by one the dogs were had out for their lessons, and we saw them at all stages of proficiency: the raw recruit who had just arrived from the country, the half-broken dog, and the perfected article—a two-year old police-dog, whose performances were quite amazing.

The dog is loosed into the large field; his business is to pick up the scent of a wounded man. He seems to work partly by scent and partly by sight, but very soon he has found his quarry lying far back behind a bank, and we next see him galloping back to his master with the man's cap between his teeth. Then, quick as lightning, the trainer puts the dog on a long leash and off he goes back to the wounded man, dragging his master after him at a tremendous pace, never slacking until he has brought human help to the sufferer. Of course the dogs varied in proficiency, in rapidity of action, and certainty of scent, according to the length of their training, but all of them seemed to have a wonderful aptitude

for the work. The exhibition dog was marvellous in these respects: with the pace of a greyhound and the nose of a first-class pointer he picked up the scent at once, raced for the wired cage, sprang up the netting with the agility of a panther and dropped on the inside beside his man; back over the netting again, with scarcely any 'take-off' to help him, and within five minutes from start to finish the dog had brought first-aid to the wounded.

On another occasion I saw these dogs being schooled near Barbizon, in the forest of Fontainebleau, a much higher trial but attended with the greatest success. It was a far more difficult matter, so one would have thought, to hunt up and retrieve the wounded in the leafy forest and among fallen trees and undergrowth, but it made no kind of difference to the dogs. And I was particularly struck with their exceeding gentleness; when I was hiding, at full length, in a bed of high bracken, a dog sprang into my lair and, with the tenderness of a nurse, picked up the handkerchief which covered my face and sped off to his master. This was a Belgian police-dog, which growled fiercely and always showed a set of very fine teeth if one approached him in his kennel.

The departure of these dogs to the Front, a score of them at a time, is always attended by a popular demonstration. The newspapers announce the rendezvous, in the Tuileries Gardens or in the Bois; the dogs arrive wearing their Red Cross jackets and attended each by his own orderly. They are paraded and inspected by a General, and then they are dismissed to a convoy of ambulance-cars which take them to the railway station where they entrain for the Front.

I hope that before long the British Army will employ this four-footed means both for dispatch-running and for tracing the wounded. The French Society have already given one dog to the Duke of Wellington's regiment at the Front, and are both willing and anxious to send us more. After seeing a number of these trials, as well as many letters bearing witness to their great usefulness and reliability under fire, I am convinced in my own opinion that there is a great field of service open to such a society if formed in England, and if, as in France, it is supported by the good-will and generous assistance of the War Office.

The following simple quatrain, written by an orderly in charge of a dog that was killed

in action, makes a fitting close to this short chapter :

Pour Clairon—mort au feu.

Atteint par un éclat de bombe
Il eut bien mérité, je crois,
Une toute petite croix
Marquant la place de sa tombe.

CHAPTER XVII

THE YEAR'S END

How Unexpected!—National Achievements—‘Confound their Politics’—*Vive l’entente!*—The Inspired Traveller—True Faith—Reflections on Montmartre—Aeroplanes at Midnight—Victory and Peace

Paris, August 2, 1915.—Last night I dined with a well-known French journalist who, a year ago, had been the Berlin correspondent of a great French newspaper. This day was the anniversary of his departure from the German capital under circumstances which were the reverse of agreeable. After a series of adventures during the succeeding forty-eight hours, he arrived on the east coast of England and proceeded to London by train. In his compartment he overheard the conversation of his two travelling companions, who had joined him, let us say, at Ipswich. The one said, ‘But you cannot remain neutral;’ and the other replied, ‘Why not? I don’t feel sufficiently strongly one way or the other, and, what is more, I don’t believe we shall ever fight.’ My French friend held his breath; Austria and

Serbia were at war ; France, Russia, and Germany were at war ; was it possible that England could stand aloof ? And then it transpired, as the conversation developed, that his two fellow travellers, sublimely unconscious that Europe was ablaze, were discussing the possibility of civil war in Ulster ! How typical of those times ! Within twenty-four hours the British Empire had declared war on Germany. Few expected it, very few desired it ; none were ready except Mr. Churchill, Prince Louis of Battenberg, and the British Navy.

What volumes of European history have been written in blood and tears since that eventful date ! What secrets of national psychology have been revealed ! What illusions concerning personages and peoples have been dispelled ! Belgium has gained immortal glory by the death of her martyrs, the bravery of her Army, and the heroism of her King—the one new MAN brought forth by the labours of a world in travail. Serbia, whose military efficiency had recently been doubted, has shown herself more than a match for the Austrian hosts hurled against her and, to the astonishment of all men, has flung them back whence they came. Germany, by her methods of barbarism, now proved up to the hilt, has

forfeited the respect (to which her marvellous organisation might otherwise have entitled her) of enemies and neutrals alike ; Russia has gained what Germany lost, by the patient endurance, the heroic self-sacrifice, and the high soldierly character of an absolutely united Empire ; Italy has already given undeniable proof of those qualities of long-suffering temperate diplomacy and quiet preparation which used not to be counted among the talents of the Latin races. France, whose army was said to be the shuttlecock of political parties, and whose civilian population was as much weakened by internal dissensions as our own, has shaken herself free of her shackles and has purged herself of corroding influences with instantaneous effect ; whilst the British Empire, *sero sed serio*, has plodded diligently along with tardy pertinacity, sometimes the delight and sometimes the despair of her Allies ; finding, training, and arming her millions from the Motherland and the daughter Colonies, until the enemy begins to recognise that her reserves of men are as inexhaustible as are the riches of her treasury.

A year ago, who would have dared write down the French nation, every mother and every son

of them, for the dogged and determined race that all military historians now declare them to be? We have lived through the months of winter, when the troops at the Front, themselves certain of ultimate victory, wondered whether the civilian population would hold out to the end; and we have survived the early spring when the pessimists told us that the French Army would never face another winter campaign. Those days, those croakers and their prophecies, are dead and gone, never to return. The *morale* of the Army was never higher than it is to-day, strained though it has been by twelve long months of blood and flood and asphyxiating bombs and gases; its one ideal is France, and its watchword is Victory. So with the civilians; whilst the Motherland is invaded by the enemy they have but one resolution, and it is adamant: to subordinate all to the needs of the Army, no matter what the sacrifice or the duration or the mourning, until France is once more free—and free for ever. There have been spasmodic intrigues in Parliament, but they have failed; the pessimists have been muzzled, and the subterranean plotters, whose incomes depended upon sowing mistrust between France and England, have temporarily

retired from business. But we must not under-rate the efforts of these mischief-makers, for they nearly succeeded in their task. Rumour of friction between the French and English head-quarter staffs was rife in every club and café; gossip concerning statesmen at variance, complaints about the non-appearance in France of three million soldiers from England, bitter observations regarding industrial unrest and strikes in Great Britain—these were the poisons sedulously spread about by German mercenaries working with their accustomed thoroughness throughout France. That they were not fatal to the *Entente Cordiale* is due not to any efforts put forward by British statesmen to counteract them during a critical summer, but to the common sense and the unbending loyalty of the French people themselves. I know that the present *Union Sacrée* between the two countries has passed unscathed through this last ordeal; but I am equally sure that, as the months pass, the same assaults will be renewed to breach the ramparts of our mutual faith and pledges. Therefore, no time should be lost in engendering a closer intimacy between the peoples of Great Britain and of France. Now is the psychological moment for a constant interchange

of visits between the politicians and the Press of both countries : not for the purpose of dinners and speeches and demonstrations, but for heart-to-heart talks, for exchanges of confidences and not compliments, and for the accumulation of first-hand knowledge of what is really being said, thought, and done on both sides of the Channel.

For the French, I am sure that such a series of visits would remove a mountain of misunderstanding. We are a very easy people to misjudge, as I have already said elsewhere, and our passion for concealing our deepest feelings beneath a cloak of indifference is a perpetual snare to our neighbours. But, once among us, in our homes and in our workshops, French intuition will quickly pierce the veneer of our assumed complacency and reveal the soul of a people as daring and determined, when properly led, as were their ancestors in the days of the Armada or of the great Napoleon himself. And on the English side there will be benefit of inestimable value ; we shall meet representatives of a nation part of whose native soil groans beneath the heel of the invader, but to whom nevertheless the word pessimism is unknown. Their losses have been immeasurably greater than ours, yet you will not find in the whole of France

a tithe of that spirit of unreasoning dejection which is so lamentably apparent among the people of London. I know not who is responsible for it—it may be our politicians or it may be our Press—but I state the fact mildly when I confess that, during the past twelve months, I have been increasingly depressed by each visit that I have paid to London—a frame of mind that is automatically cured as one approaches nearer to the Front and recedes farther from the arm-chairs of Pall Mall and the green benches at Westminster. It is because I believe this subnormal temperament to be a disease dangerous and contagious that I want to see it altered ruthlessly and at once. *Experientia docet*; the effect of a short visit to France, not necessarily to the Front, has worked wonders upon the spirits of many Englishmen of my acquaintance, and they have been the first to confess it. Cannot the experiment be repeated on a far larger scale? There are plenty of men who say they have nothing to do in England; let them spend an autumn month in France behind the lines. There are others, politicians for example, who want to do more; they will best serve their neighbours and themselves if they come out and breathe the atmosphere of a country in which war is actually

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being carried on. It will inspirit them and hearten them for their work in England by showing them a wonderful picture of patience at home married to pluck at the Front, of courage that knows no time-limits, and of resolution whose edge is not blunted by the disappointment of delay. There are not a few who will return from such a visit with their opinions modified upon the subject of compulsory military service, which, if it does nothing else, renders impossible the occurrence and recurrence of those miserable industrial strikes that reinforce the enemy, morally and materially, with the strength of many an army corps. And, when the travellers are once more back in England, their depression will have left them and they will infuse a new spirit of determination and sacrifice among those who look to them for information and leadership. Their faith will have been renewed in the power of our race. This is the true faith which I learned 'out of the mouths of babes.' One of my boys wrote to me in May that a Zeppelin was raiding over that part of the coast where his school is situated. The alarm was given about midnight, and the children were all summoned from their beds to assemble downstairs. For the rest I quote :

When we were all collected in our pyjamas in 'big-school' we made no end of a row and there was great excitement. At last one of the masters came in and shouted above the din: 'Can't you boys be prepared to die quietly, like gentlemen?' So somebody started singing '*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*' and we sang it until we were sent upstairs to bed again.

.

August 4.—It is midnight and I am standing on the roof-terrace of a well-known artist's house at the very top of Montmartre. We have had an extraordinary evening downstairs in the 'canteen,' where night after night Monsieur and Madame Maurice Neumont cater and care for the wants of countless poor artists in all the talents, who have been thrown out of work by the War. The ground-floor of the house is set apart for this work of friendship, and there we supped with some fifty fellow guests, drawn from the deserted studios and concert-halls, the cabarets and theatres of Paris. The fare is simple, the prices are low, but the heart is high. On the walls are pinned sketches and portraits which, in better days, would have found a ready market and a satisfactory price. Here is a likeness of the sad-eyed poet who, with a wreath of blood-red roses on his brow,



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THE MARTYR, 1915

By D. O. WIDHOPFF

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Suggested by the published report of the crucifixion of a Canadian sergeant after the second battle of Ypres.

recited his verses to us to the accompaniment of a guitar; there a sketch of the picturesque old tenor in breeches and stockings whose patriotic songs with choruses warmed the hearts of his audience and, for the moment, drowned their cares in a flood of melody. So, with music and recitations and tobacco, artists and actors, models and musicians, passed a joyous evening and allowed me in the intervals of conversation to learn something of their altered lives. But what touched me most was a picture in crayons, drawn especially for me by Widopff the Russian artist and pinned upon the wall opposite to my seat. It represents the story of the Canadian sergeant found crucified upon a door after the second battle of Ypres, but it beautifies and sanctifies that dark tragedy by a touch of genius.

That picture haunts me still as I stand upon this lofty terrace with the cloudless sky above me and Paris quietly sleeping at my feet. The time and place induce the spirit of meditation upon the latest Crime of the World and all the misery and suffering that the German War has inflicted upon humanity in the course of one short year.

But a mysterious throbbing sound, as of wings invisible, and the vision of brilliant star-lamps

passing across the silent heavens, recall us from reflections upon the past to the more insistent considerations of the present and the future. The aeroplanes are keeping a ceaseless watch above us. We know, my host and I, what France and England have escaped and suffered in the year that is gone, and, as we gaze out into the starry night, we pray with aching hearts for the early dawning of the Day of Victory and Peace.

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